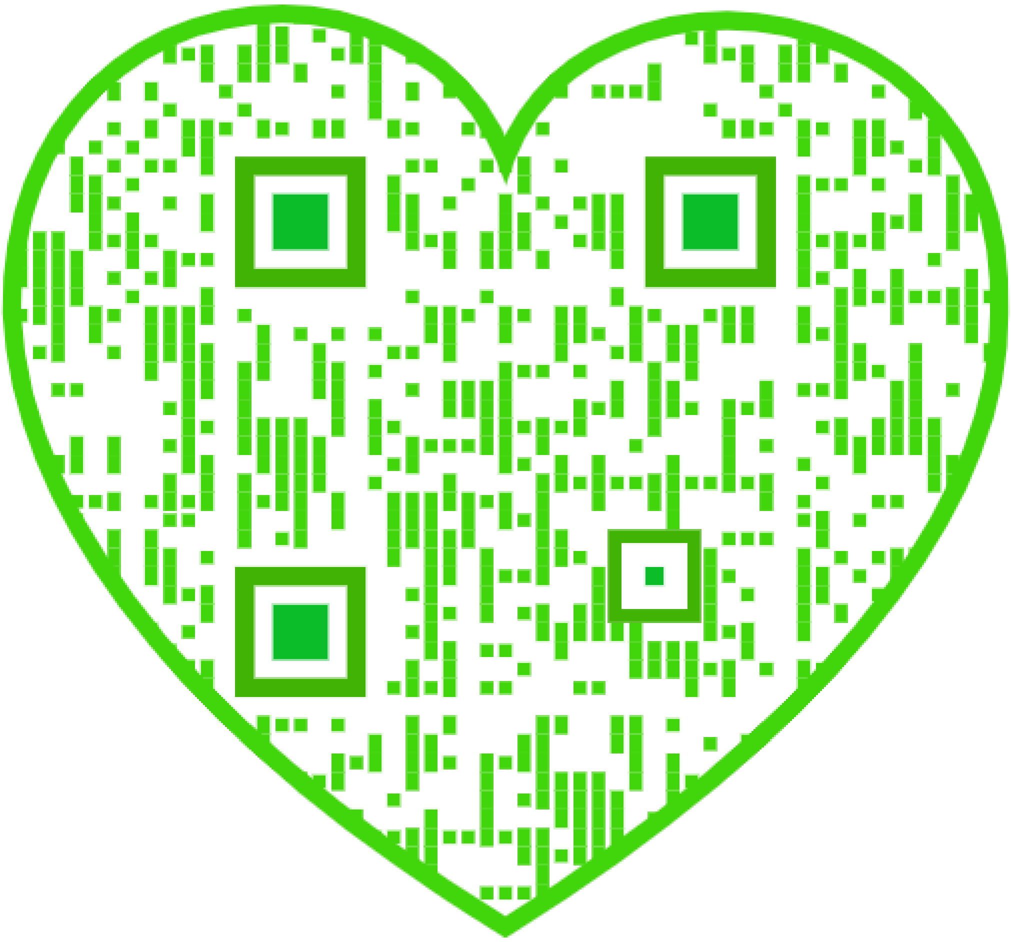
artasiapacific |

SU-MEI TSE · ANGELA GOH
BRUNO ZHU · KEI IMAZU · GREG ITO

ISSUE 143 MAY/JUN 2025



RECORDS

物方志

Maeve Brennan

梅芙・布倫南

MAEVE BRENNAN: RECORDS
21.03–08.06.2025

UPCOMING:
ON KAWARA:
RULES OF FREEDOM, FREEDOM OF RULES
23.05–17.08.2025

CONTEMPORARY
ART EXHIBITION

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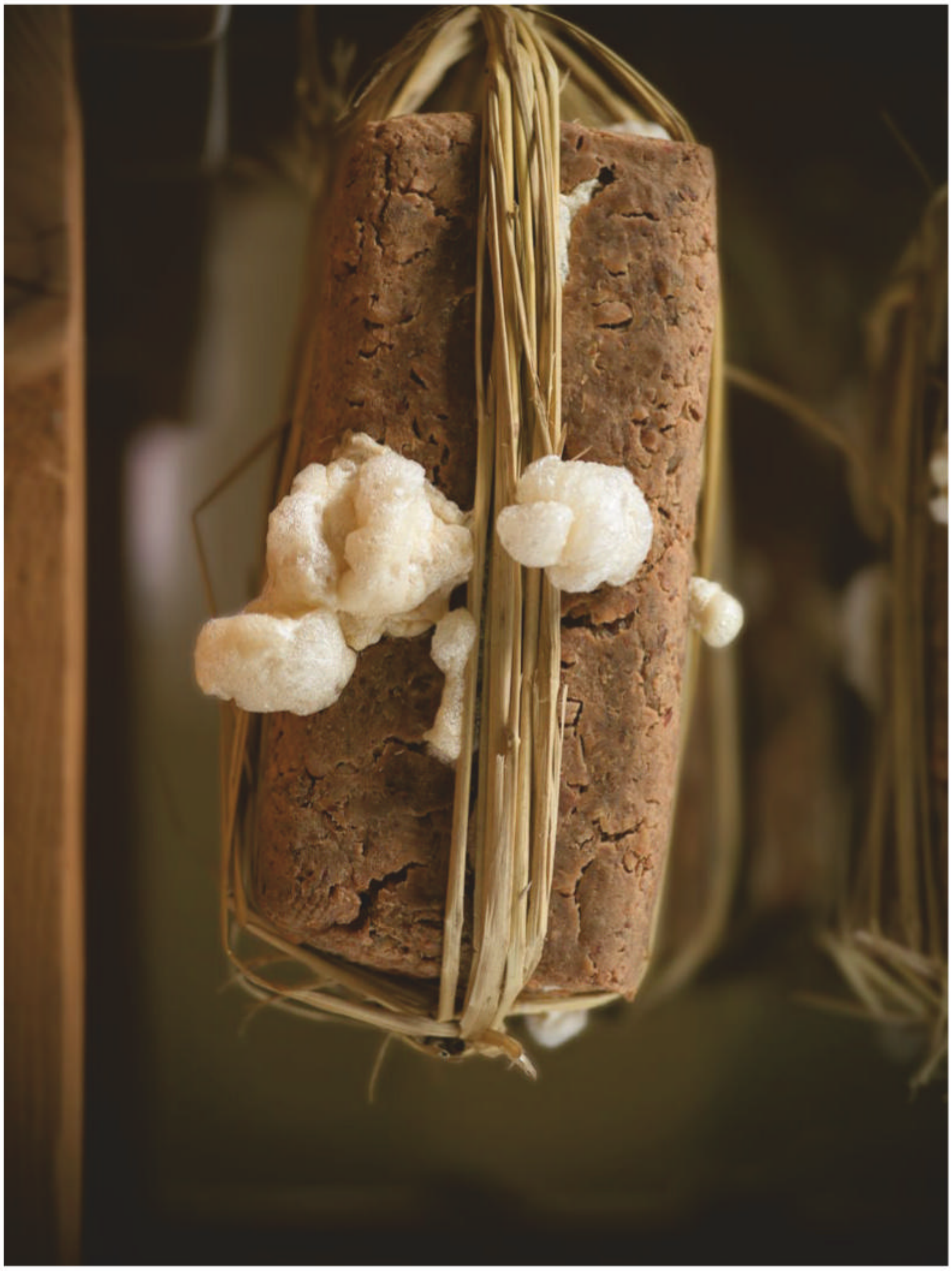


Yeondoo Jung

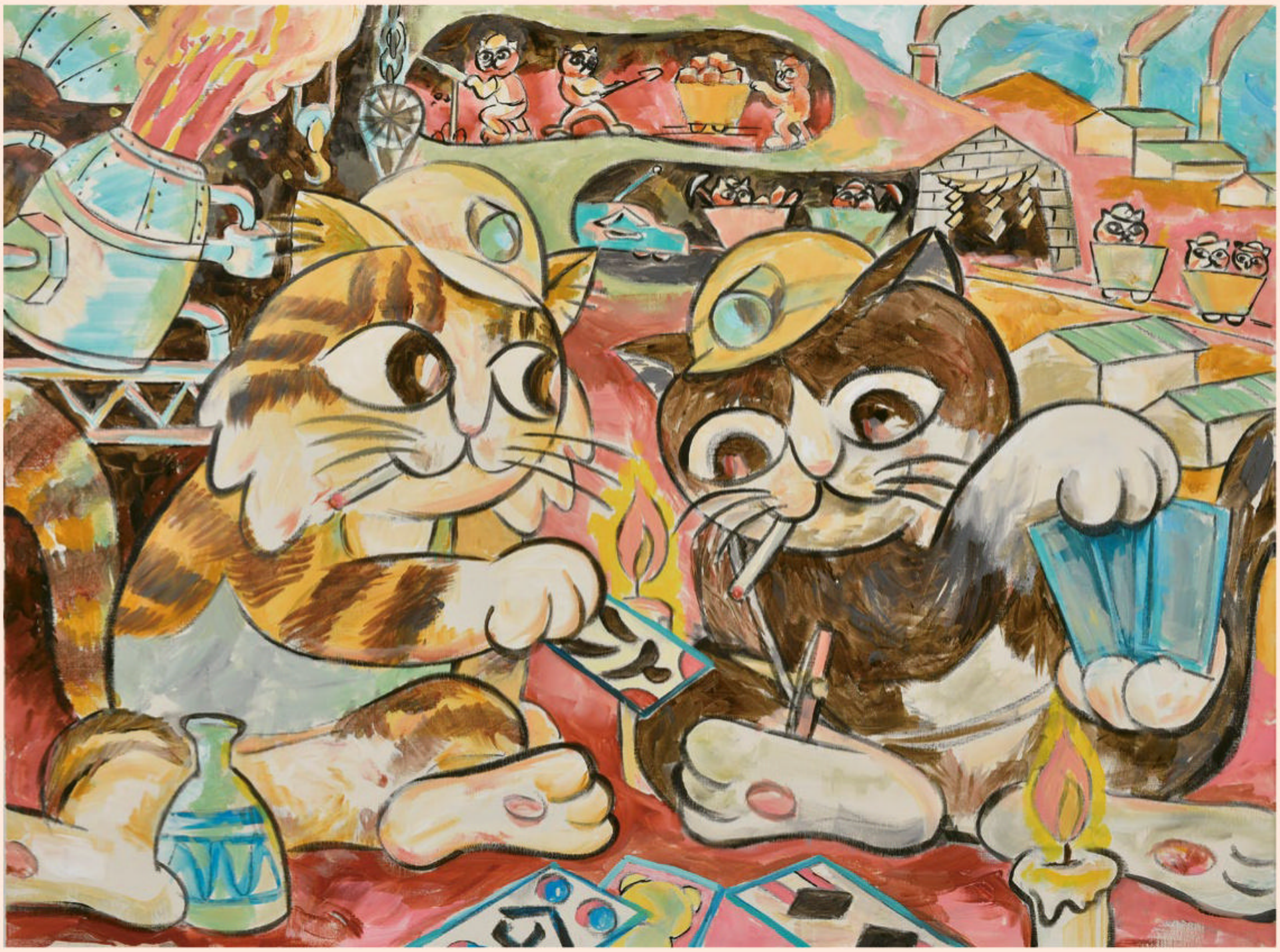
The Inevitable, Inacceptable

불가피한 상황과 피치 못할 사정들

25 Apr—20 Jul 2025

KUKJE GALLERY

BUSAN



Cat's Ashio Copper Mine — Light and Darkness

Nobuaki Takekawa

17 May – 28 July 2025

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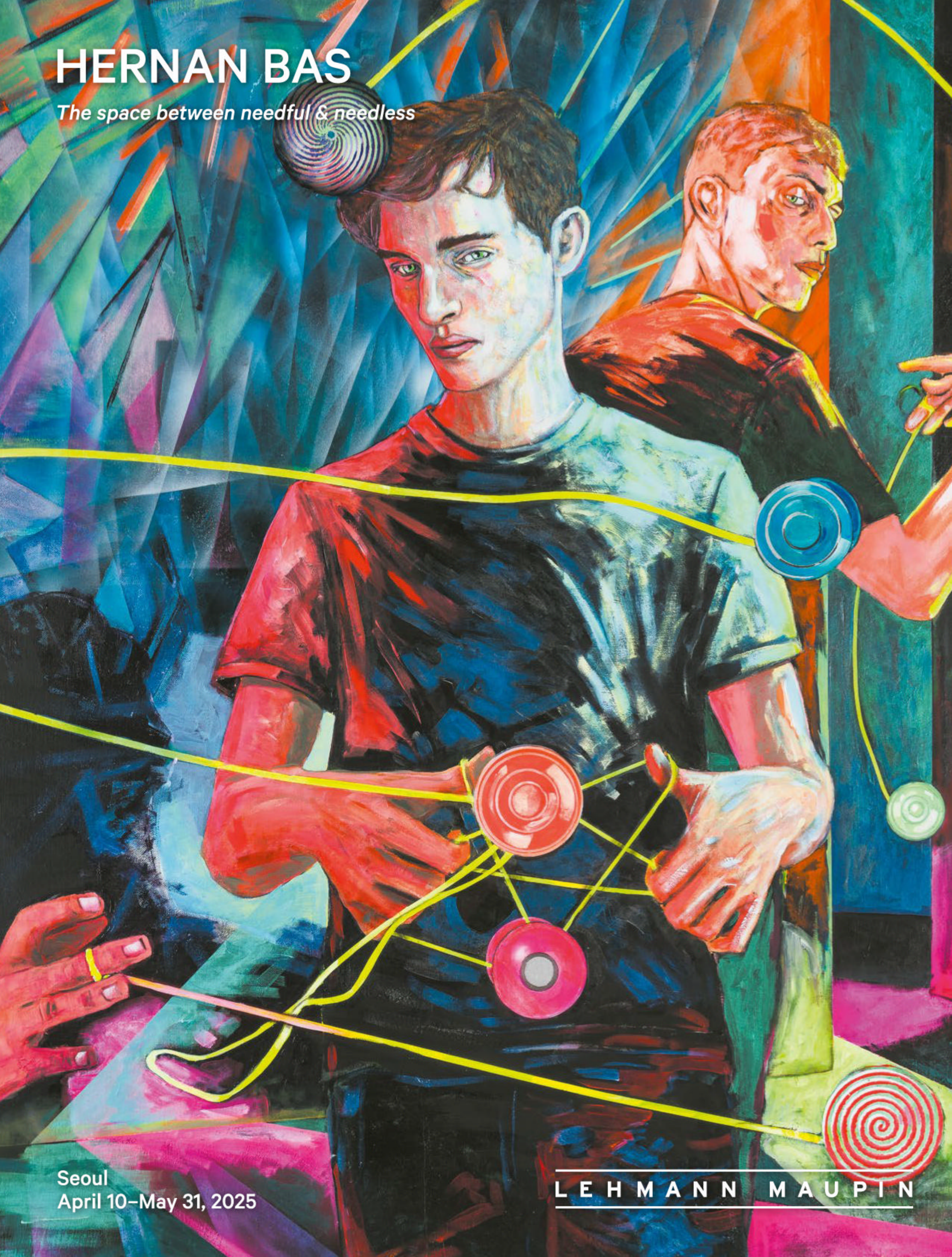
Nobuaki Takekawa, *Forget About Work and Have Fun*, 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 97 x 130 cm

HERNAN BAS

The space between needful & needless



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1920s–1940s

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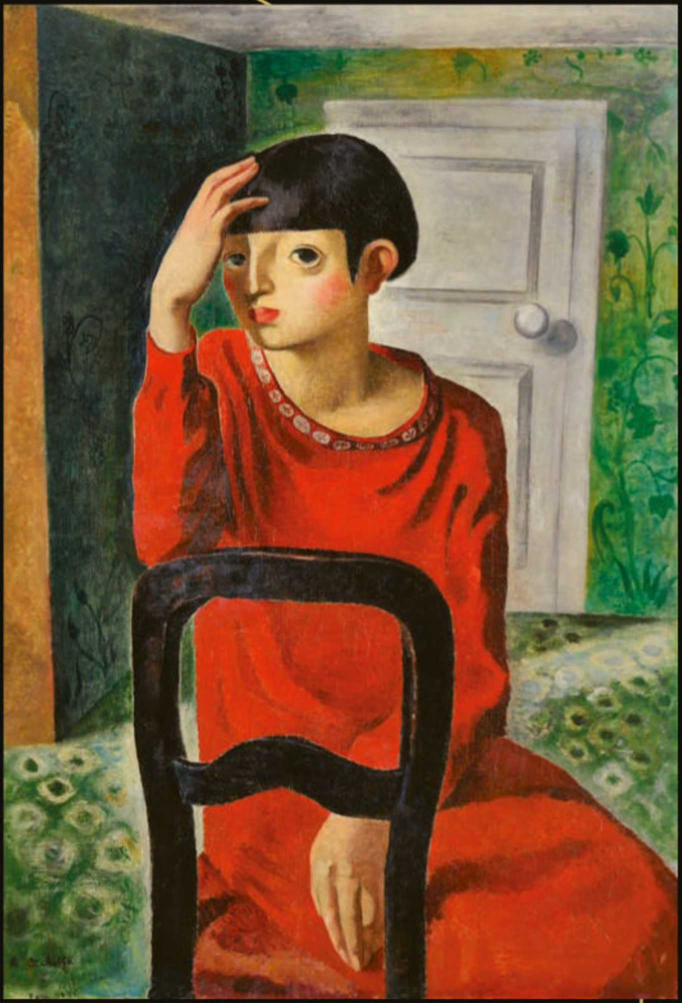
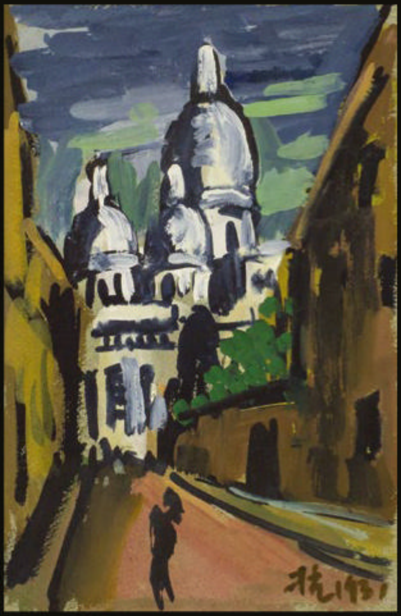


Itakulla Kanae.《赤衣の女》(Woman in Red Dress). 1929. Oil on canvas, 116.8 × 80.3 cm. Collection of Matsudo City Board of Education. Image courtesy of Matsudo City Board of Education.



Liu Kang. *View of Sacré-Cœur*. 1931. Gouache on paper, 25 × 16.5 cm. Collection of the family of Liu Kang. © Liu Kang Family.

There's more to Paris than meets the eye.

In the 1920s-40s, Paris was a "city of others"—a meeting point for migrants and visitors from around the world.

Coming from places where modern art was already evolving on its own path, artists from Asia journeyed to Paris to further their art practice and careers. Paris was a site of creative exuberance, diversity, and opportunity for artists, but could also one be of exploitation, racism, and resistance.

How then did Asian artists in Paris present themselves to the world?

Come learn more at *City of Others: Asian Artists in Paris, 1920s-1940s*, a groundbreaking exhibition that examines the art history of Paris from Asian perspectives. The exhibition explores the experiences of Asian artists in Paris during a dynamic period, featuring works by Foujita Tsuguharu, Georgette Chen, Lê Phổ, Liu Kang, Pai Un-soung, Itakulla Kanae, and Hamanaka Katsu.

nationalgallery.sg/City-of-Others

NationalGallerySingapore

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Malingue

‘The Lights from the Deep Mountains’

Hiroka Yamashita

(Solo exhibition)
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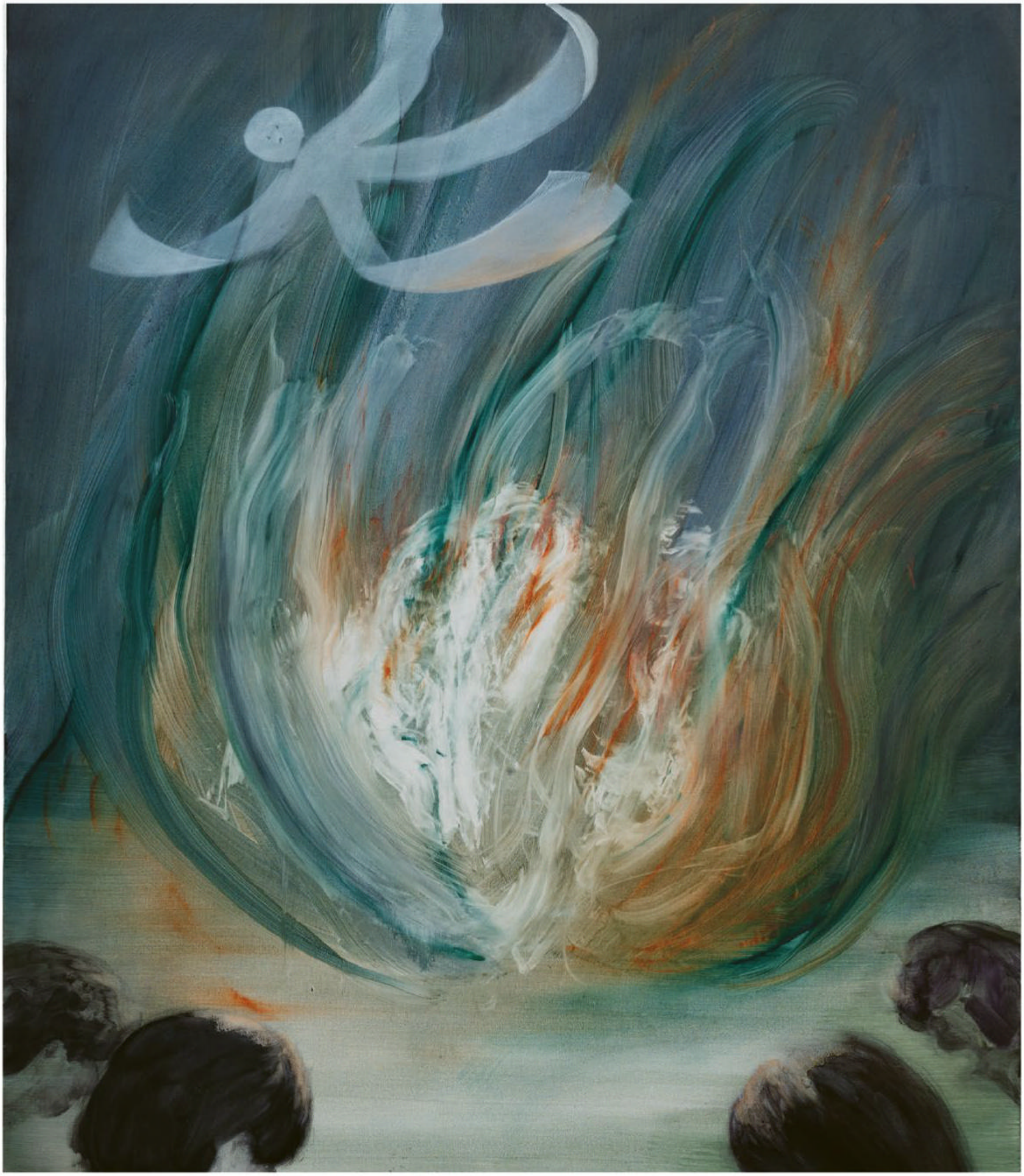
New York, NY 10002



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Bahnhof

Nationalgalerie
der Gegenwart

Ayoung Kim
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28.2.–
20.7.25

Nationalgalerie
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Hamburger Bahnhof –
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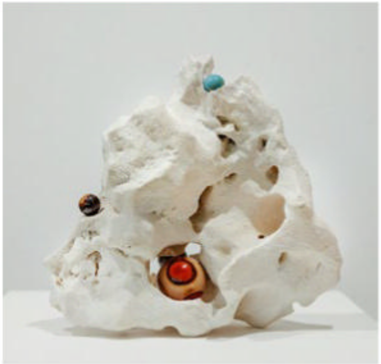

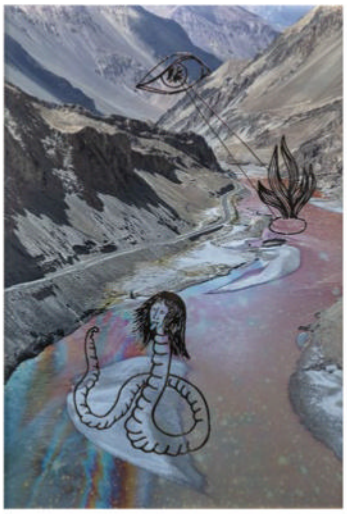

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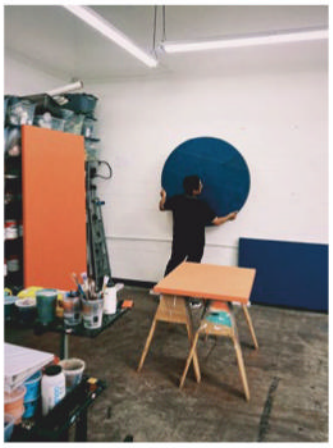

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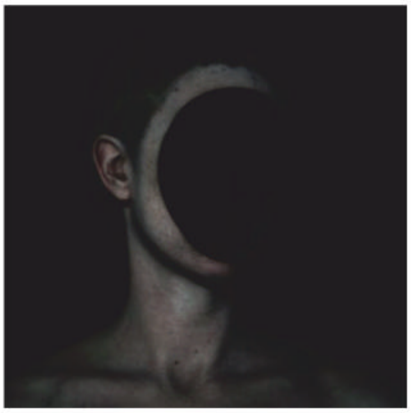

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KWANG YOUNG CHUN

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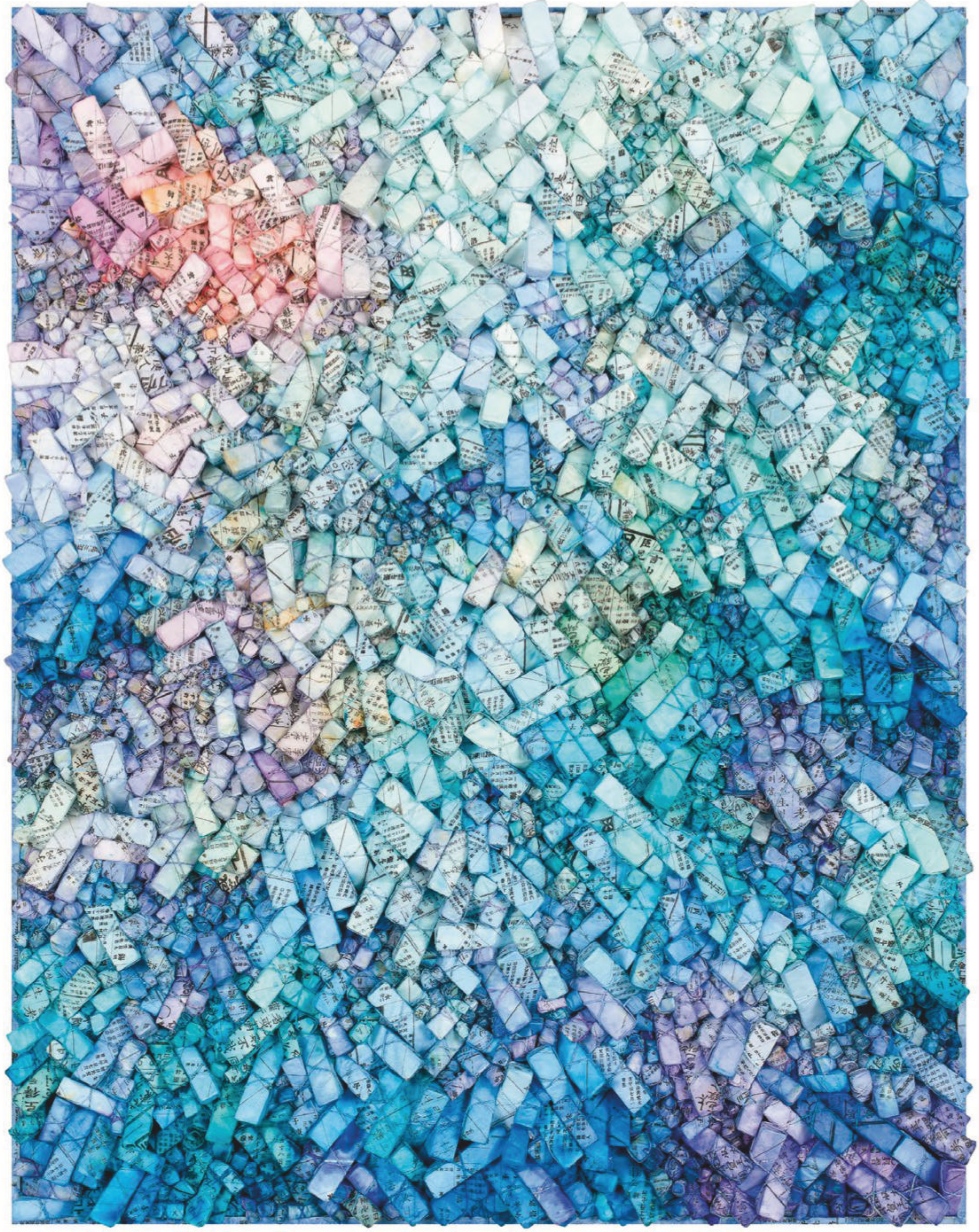
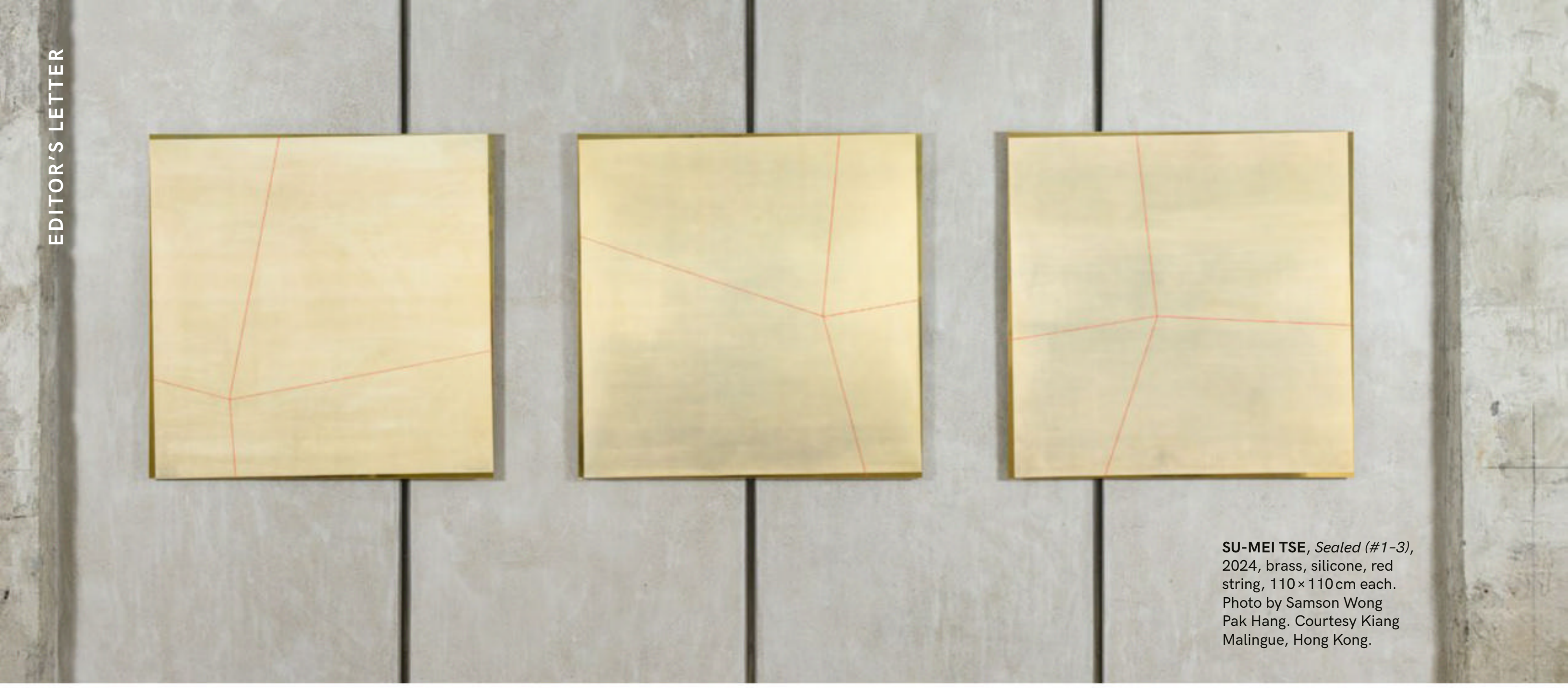
MAY 15 – JULY 5, 2025



Kwang Young Chun, *Aggregation 23-AP051*, 2023. Mixed media with Korean mulberry paper. 118 × 92 × 12 cm | 46 7/16 × 36 1/4 × 4 3/4 in. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



SU-MEI TSE, *Sealed (#1–3)*, 2024, brass, silicone, red string, 110 × 110 cm each. Photo by Samson Wong Pak Hang. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.

Editor's Letter

In our collective moment of anxiety-inducing political rhetoric and endlessly cascading bad news, this issue of *ArtAsiaPacific* spotlights artists' work that seeks to reframe our sense of reality.

Our cover article features the work of Angela Goh, whose performance *Total* (2024) I was fortunate to experience at a symposium at the Leeum Museum of Art in Seoul last November. I was hypnotized by Goh's unpredictable, quietly insistent actions that unfolded before a small audience. Like a vivid dream, her absurd gestures hover in my memory. *AAP* Sydney desk editor, Johanna Bear, explores Goh's decade-long career of contorting her body like a puppet, pushing its limits. The artist explained to Bear that her choreography, as she experiences it, is an embodied meditation on life: "Thinking of what is not yet, not here, not quite, or not done is where the possibility to affect the world around you comes from. Of course the imagination can produce awful things, but it is also what produces joy, humor, and the unexpected."

The work of Su-Mei Tse also shifts our perspectives. HG Masters sat down with Tse during her recent solo exhibition in Hong Kong and learned that the practice of the Luxembourg-born artist, who in 2003 won the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale for best national pavilion, is informed by her background as a classically trained cellist. Masters explains how Tse magically weaves image, time, and memory into poetic narratives that pull you inside and then lets you wander in the spaces between sound and silence. He writes, "[Her works] function like a composition, mirroring the musical sense of arranging notes in time and space, across different registers in a score, to bring out resonances and harmonies of ideas."

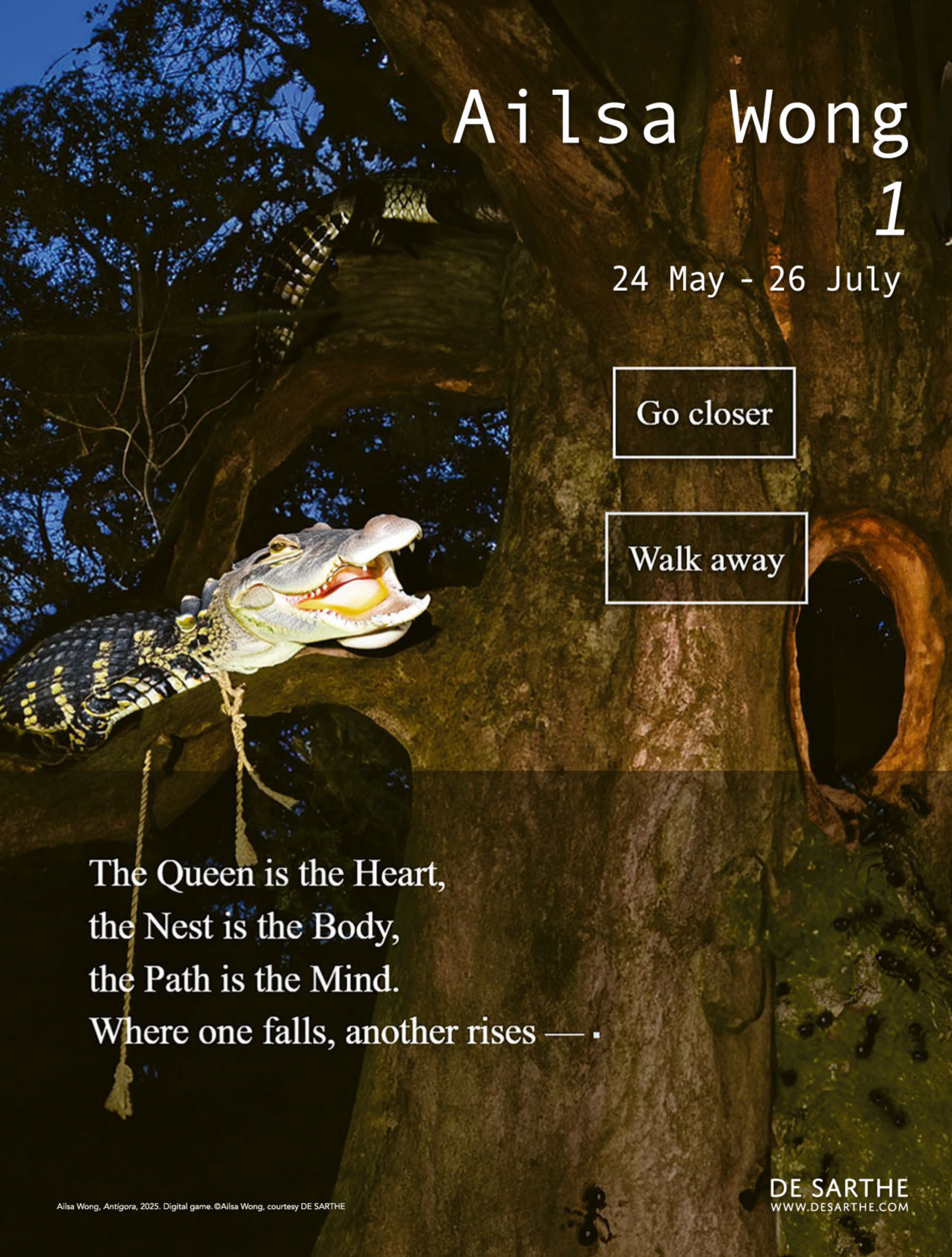
Elsewhere in features, Up Close spotlights Jane Jin Kaisen's multilayered video installation *Ieodo (Island Beyond the Sea)* (2022–24); Shuang Li's affecting *Demolition Lovers* (2024), an installation inspired by a Covid-induced separation between Li and her mother, presented at Prada Rong Zhai in Shanghai; and the acclaimed Raqs Media Collective's new multimedia spectacle, which debuted in Hong Kong in March and considers our future in the context of AI.

For Inside Burger Collection, Alex Jen, assistant curator of prints and drawings and arts of Asia at the Art Institute of Chicago, reflects on the legacy of postwar American artist Anne Truitt, whose sculptures stand as hushed monumental ruminations on color and memory. Jen writes, "I am emboldened by Truitt's journals, in which she reminded us that how we perceive art is clearly affected by how we perceive, indeed how we love and lament, life." Her minimalist forms, unlike the cold abstractions of her peers, pulse with psychological depth and tactile intimacy, inviting viewers to linger in quiet reflection.

In Profiles, Chloe Chu considers the restlessly energetic Bruno Zhu, whose surprising installations, critiquing principles of spatial manipulation and display, tease out how narratives of identity are constructed. Hung Duong met up with Japanese-born, Bandung-based Kei Imazu on the eve of her solo exhibition at Museum MACAN in Jakarta. The two discuss her baroque artworks, which often combine analog and digital materials in order to mine the personal, historical, and mythological.

In Essays, *AAP* contributing editor Ryan Su considers creative ways for artists and galleries to prepare for forthcoming tariff wars. From Brisbane, curator and art historian Elizabeth Ann MacGregor reflects on the Creative Australia censorship fiasco and its potential consequences for art and creative expression. Jakarta-based artist Ella Witj pens a One on One, reflecting on her first encounter with Doris Salcedo's work—at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago when Witj was a young art student. Hung Duong files the Dispatch from Ho Chi Minh City, describing the can-do energy that fuels the city's artists, art workers, and cultural spaces. In Reviews, we cover the ambitious curatorial efforts for the 16th edition of the Sharjah Biennale as well as major solo exhibitions from Seoul to Seattle. Lastly, for Where I Work, *AAP* Los Angeles desk editor Jennifer S. Li takes us to the studio of Greg Ito. His paintings, with their flat, dreamlike surfaces and layered symbolism, create immersive worlds that—like all the projects in this issue—unsettle viewers, inviting curiosity and contemplation.

ELAINE W. NG



Ailsa Wong

1

24 May - 26 July

The Queen is the Heart,
the Nest is the Body,
the Path is the Mind.
Where one falls, another rises — ▪

Ailsa Wong, *Antigora*, 2025. Digital game. ©Ailsa Wong, courtesy DE SARTHE

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to carry

a home
a history
a trade
a wound
equatorial heat
resistance
a library of redacted documents
rupture
Te Pō [the beginnings]
change
songs
on
land
the language of the inner soul
new formations
the embrace of a river current
sisterhood and communal connection
the rays of a morning without fear

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ANGELA GOH, *Sky Blue Mythic*, at Sydney Opera House, Sydney, 2021. Photo by Prudence Upton. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

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(See PROFILES)

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(See DISPATCH and PROFILES)

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(See THE POINT)

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(See REVIEWS)

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(See PROFILES)

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(See REVIEWS)

ELLA WITJ

Ella Witj is a Jakarta-born artist who creates mixed-media paintings and sculptural installations. After graduating from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2015, she returned to Indonesia in 2017. A year later, she co-founded Rumah Tangga, an artist-run space and library in Depok, West Java. She has participated in exhibitions and residencies in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and the US.
(See ONE ON ONE)

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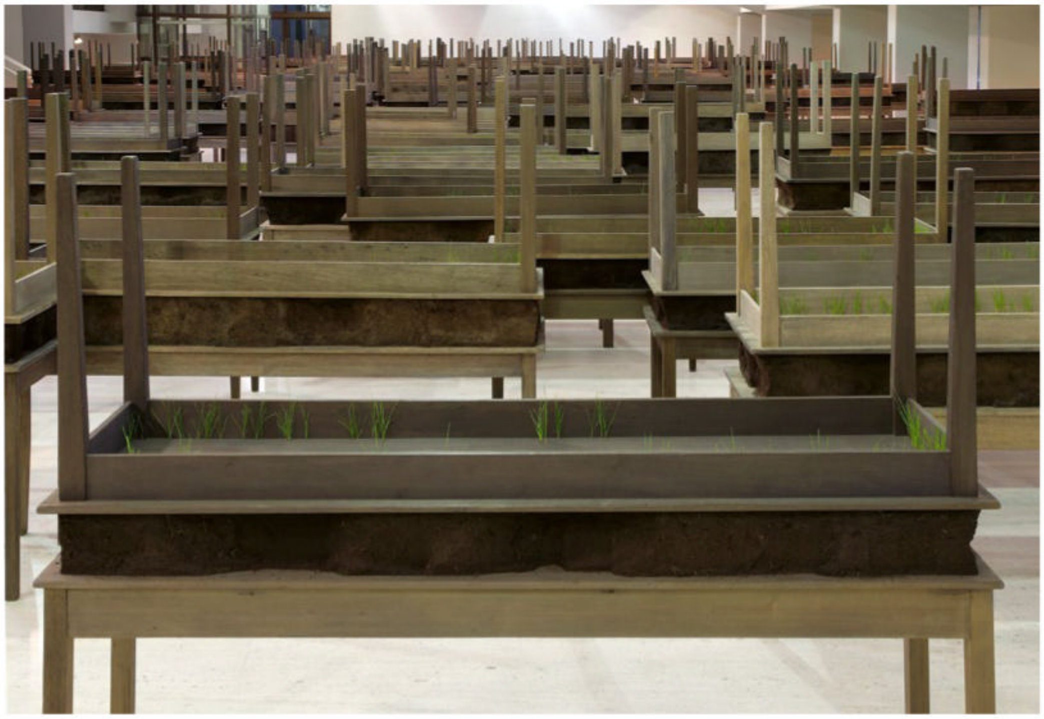
Ella Witj on Doris Salcedo



Installation view of **DORIS SALCEDO**'s *Plegaria Muda*, 2008–10, wood, mineral compound, soil, concrete, metal, and grass, 166 units, 164 × 214 × 61 cm each, at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2011. Photo by Patrizia Tocci. Courtesy the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.

It was during the summer of 2015, just following my graduation, that I first encountered the work of Colombian-born artist Doris Salcedo at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Her show was on the fourth floor, the last one I visited in the museum that day. Before stepping foot into the exhibition, I had no idea it was about to change the course of my practice.

At the time, as an Indonesian living in the US, I felt constantly challenged. I had difficulties grasping the language, mannerisms, and context of discussions in my social life and classes. I forced myself to endure these trials in order to survive and create with honesty. It was not easy, and I often felt small. Perhaps these experiences played some part in my deep response to Salcedo's work.

Upon entering, I was greeted by *Plegaria Muda* (2008–10). The work comprises long, narrow wooden tables, each covered with a thick layer of soil and held in place by identical, overturned tables that had been placed on top. Bright green blades of grass sprouted from crevices in the upended tabletops and pushed toward the light. I remember immediately feeling sad, but also captivated, moved, and overwhelmingly humbled. I did not yet know the context of the work, but I felt a strong resonance.

As I moved through the exhibition, I learned that *Plegaria Muda* meant "silent prayer," and that Salcedo had dedicated the installation to victims of gang-related shootings in Los Angeles, as well as to rural youths murdered by the Colombian army. I was stunned by how Salcedo had managed to translate these stories with her chosen materials, and how she had created something so powerful and universally relatable.

It was hard for me to move on to the next work, but I knew I had to see the show in its entirety. Salcedo's works did not allow me to easily pass by. They told a story of absence. They asked me to mourn, to be with them, to honor their stories of origin, and to carry their history within as I moved among them. I found myself sobbing through the entire exhibition; my heart was stirred, shaken, ripped apart, and then healed.

Salcedo makes it her job to be present and to listen to casualties of political failures. These are stories of loss, grief, and powerlessness. It takes great courage and a strong heart to listen, and it takes vulnerability and deep understanding to turn these accounts into works of art. This is not easy to do. I feel that Salcedo must be in a state of mourning every day of her life, because her works truly embody and live out the testimony of these victims.

Salcedo's practice becomes particularly important to me when I look at what is happening in Indonesia today. It seems that there is a constant stream of environmental catastrophes, corruption, violence, and serious human rights issues, the majority of which are largely overlooked for the sake of the wealthy and powerful. It is impossible to escape the news, and I frequently find myself feeling small, or believing that my art is too insignificant to make any difference.

Fortunately, Salcedo's work grounds me. It does not seek praise, nor any form of worldly recognition. Instead, her creations ask me to pray, and to remember their stories in my daily life, so that I, too, can embody empathy, understanding, and faith. Because of her efforts, I have become a better listener. I also write more poetry in my studio, in order to reach that unspoken feeling I first encountered in *Plegaria Muda*. My own practice, too, has become a prayer. When I recall her words, "it requires an artist to think across and beyond disaster," I have renewed hope and purpose in being an artist.

Ho Chi Minh City

BY HUNG DUONG

True to its reputation as a port city dating back to the late 17th century, Saigon (now administratively known as Ho Chi Minh City) is a confluence of cultural streams carrying millions of microhistories. Constantly in flux, the metropolis seems to molt and change skin every week, with new people and ideas emerging to replace previous ones. If you blink here, you might miss something (be it a trendy new cafe or a spirited Grab driver waltzing your way!). Saigon's receptive attitude toward novelties thus offers fertile ground for unconventional seeds to germinate in the city's ever-expanding contemporary art scene.

Over the last few years, the Saigonese contemporary art landscape has undergone critical shifts. When world-renowned artist Dinh Q. Lê died in 2024—one of the founders of Sàn Art, an independent space with a nearly two-decade-long track record of nurturing artistic innovation in Vietnam—many local creatives experienced a profound sense of loss and uncertainty. For an art scene that heavily relies on personal initiatives (instead of governmental backing) to rally and maintain collective passion, Lê's passing not only stirred up emotions but also raised questions about sustainability: How do we build cultural infrastructures with long-term visions while still supporting transient experimentations?

Thankfully, other organizations—old and new—have risen to shoulder the art ecosystem's cumulative weight. At the forefront is the multibranch Nguyen Art Foundation (NAF), which focuses on contemporary art collection, exhibition, and public education. Founded in 2018 by Quỳnh Nguyễn, NAF has served as an active agent in promoting homegrown artists and developing skills for the city's cultural workers. Recent noteworthy happenings include "In Absence, Presence" (2024–25), a group show of four Vietnamese women artists who span different generations and practices, curated by NAF director Bill Nguyễn; and "DEMONS REVENGE" (2025), a lecture performance and screening program co-organized by NAF curator Thái Hà and the Fatal & Fallen film project, critically examining the concept of vengeance in the Anthropocene. The iconoclastic thinking of young artists and curators in Saigon continues to intertwine with community-building initiatives, providing checks and balances for the local art scene's organic development.

Aside from NAF, other stakeholders fortified their dedication to the arts in Saigon. Galerie Quynh—the city's longest-standing contemporary art gallery—celebrated its 21st anniversary with the retrospective group show "21 Years of Galerie Quynh" (2025), which traverses the gallery's past and current artist rosters. Meanwhile, A. Farm International Artist Residency—which launched in 2018 and is currently managed by the independent artist-run space MoT+++ and the nonprofit Goethe-Institut Ho Chi Minh City—continues its Season 7 with open studios and public programs coordinated by local and international residents. As Saigon and the rest of the world enter an era of sociopolitical haze and economic upheaval, these private entities are crucial to the integrity of the contemporary art community.

Embracing the old while welcoming the new—such should be Saigon's motto. As nascent players emerge left and right, they bring their own ambitions, visions, and networks that enrich the art scene's social fabric. Most notable was a private viewing put together by Phillips auction house, titled "Correspondence: Anselm Kiefer & Danh Võ" (2025), that brought Kiefer's 1977 painting *Wege der Weltweisheit* into dialogue with Võ's sculptures *We the People* (2011–16) and *Untitled* (2013). With loans from NAF and one of Phillips's private clients in Vietnam, the viewing offered a new model of collaboration between local keyholders and the global art market, connecing art discourses in Vietnam to a larger framework.

Echoing this collaborative spirit in an academic context was "Sensing Photography: Vietnam & Vectors of Global Photography" (2025), an international conference—co-organized by Trâm Lương and artist Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn—that gathered high-caliber art historians, artists, and cultural workers from Vietnam and elsewhere together to weave a more complex portrait of Vietnam's photographic history. The accompanying exhibition, "A Radial System," featured Dogma Collection's private archive of Vietnam War photographs and other workshops directed by local and international practitioners. With these new initiatives, Saigon continues to serve as a hub for artistic exploration, where every idea has room to grow.

As bizarre developments unfurl (cue the tariff war!) and unprecedented natural disasters erupt across the world, we are deeply reminded of our precarious existence and how much effort it takes to rebuild after a storm. Yet, despite regional and global turbulence, Saigon's community remains nimble and resilient, with an innate spirit for innovation and their eyes fixed on uncharted horizons. After all, no problem is too daunting if we start the day with a cup of coffee with condensed milk!

Aerial view of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Photo by Diego Delso. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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NEWS ROUNDUP

CAREER MOVES

In early March, Eva Madjiboj-Levy stepped down as general manager of Jerusalem's Israel Museum, less than 18 months into her role. Her departure marks the institution's fourth major leadership change, and comes as Israeli cultural establishments face increased international scrutiny amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

On March 5, Nora Razian and Sabih Ahmed were appointed as artistic directors for the third edition of the Diriyah Biennale, which will run from January to April 2026 at the JAX District in Diriyah, on the outskirts of Riyadh.

The Shanghai Biennale revealed the curatorial team for its 15th edition, titled "Does the flower hear the bee?," which will open in early November 2026 at the Power Station of Art. Joining chief curator Kitty Scott—who was appointed last year—are co-curators Daisy Desrosiers, Xue Tan, Long Yitang, and Zhang Yinging.

In Taiwan, the Tainan Art Museum (TNAM) announced a major leadership reshuffle, naming art critic and curator Gong Zhuojun as its new director. Additionally, You Wenmei, the secretary-general of the Taiwan Art Gallery Association, was selected to chair the TNAM board.

Over in Australia, Maud Page stepped up as the new director of Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), succeeding Michael Brand, who will depart in July. With this appointment, Page is AGNSW's first female leader in the institution's 154-year history.

On April 2, Aric Chen resigned as general and artistic director of the Rotterdam-based Nieuwe Instituut, after serving a four-year tenure. He is set to leave the cultural center in late June, taking on a new role as director of London's Zaha Hadid Foundation.

Portrait of **ARIC CHEN**. Photo by Marwan Magroun. Courtesy the Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In late February, Sharjah revealed plans to construct the Sharjah Creative Quarter (SQC), which will serve as a new cultural platform for local and international artists, creatives, and scholars. Designed by award-winning Mexican architectural firm Taller de Arquitectura - Mauricio Rocha and Daniel Rossello, the SCQ will comprise facilities such as co-working spaces and cafés.

Meanwhile, Shanghai-based BANK gallery announced its relocation to a cultural industry park in Jing'An district. Opening its new venue on March 30 with a solo exhibition of Chinese artist Lin Ke, the gallery also launched a temporary outpost in New York from March 21 to mid-August. Elsewhere in Manhattan, Kiang Malingue is set to unveil its new space in the Lower East Side in May, marking the Hong Kong-based gallery's first overseas expansion.

In March, Melbourne began construction on Australia's largest gallery dedicated to contemporary art and design, The Fox: NGV Contemporary, in the inner-city suburb of Southbank. Designed by Sydney-based architect Angelo Candalepas and his firm Candalepas and Associates, the gallery will boast 30,000 square meters and multiple exhibition galleries, serving as a global platform for the arts.

View of the Paul Chiang Art Center in Taitung. Photo by Studio Millspace. Courtesy Paul Chiang Art Organization, Taitung.

After four years of renovations, Iran's Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum reopened on March 15. The institution is a crucial hub for Iranian art, and has supported local and international artists, students, and art researchers over the past three decades. Along with two inaugural exhibitions, more than 700 visual artworks from the museum's collection were publicly displayed in one of its four galleries.

On the same day, the Paul Chiang Art Center opened in Jinzun, a fishing port village in Taitung County, eastern Taiwan. Dedicated to the Taiwanese abstract artist Paul Chiang, the new institution will host exhibitions and artist residencies and provide art education for youths while fostering homegrown creatives.

CONTROVERSIES

After the Kawamura Memorial DIC Museum of Art in Sakura City—run by the cash-strapped Japanese chemical giant DIC Corporation—closed in March, Hong Kong-based activist fund Oasis Management issued a public statement, condemning the company's decision to relocate several priceless postwar American artworks from the museum's collection to the private, nonprofit organization International House of Japan. Oasis, a major DIC shareholder, described the move as "an extreme misallocation of company assets," as well as "an apparent attempt to deprive shareholders of their rightful assets."

In late March, the Australian Federal Police seized several valuable artworks as part of an ongoing investigation into a Melbourne-based crime syndicate. The recovered pieces include a page of erotic drawings by Brett Whiteley, a Ned Kelly portrait by Adam Cullen, and landscape paintings by Ben Quilty and Fred Williams. Authorities valued the artworks at an estimated AUD 500,000 (USD 314,460), contributing to over AUD 11 million (USD 7 million) in total seized assets.

On April 1, a video by Chinese Australian dissident artist Badiucao was screened on large outdoor billboards at two locations in Hong Kong's Mong Kok neighborhood. The four-second black-and-white video showed Badiucao silently mouthing "you must take part in revolution"—a line taken from *On Practice*, a 1937 essay by the late Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong. The artist shared the stunt on social media, and the video was removed from the billboards less than 24 hours later.

For more news, see our website: artasiapacific.com/news.

View of **BADIUCAO**'s video displayed on a billboard in Mong Kok, Hong Kong. Courtesy Hong Kong Free Press.

Continuing Fallout in the Arts over Palestine

After Israel resumed its brutal military assault on Gaza in late March, shattering a tenuous 42-day ceasefire deal, the conflict continues to reverberate through the global art scene.

On March 11, renowned Pakistani architect and humanitarian Yasmeen Lari turned down this year's Wolf Prize for architecture, which is granted annually by the Israeli nonprofit Wolf Foundation. Just a day after the latter revealed its list of winners, Lari announced her rejection on social media, citing the ongoing atrocities in Palestine as her reason for declining the USD 100,000 accolade. She thanked the jury for selecting her, but stated that "in view of the unfortunate continuing genocide in Gaza, I am not able to accept the award . . . even from an organization that is independent of the government."

Following Lari's decision to forgo the 2025 Wolf Prize, Chinese architect Xu Tiantian was the only other person in the architecture category to receive the award.

Meanwhile, in Australia, Khaled Sabsabi is still grappling with the fallout of his controversial expulsion from the 2026 Venice Biennale. Just over a month after Creative Australia—the country's official arts council—removed Sabsabi from the national pavilion team over his earlier works referencing Hezbollah and 9/11, Melbourne's Monash University announced its decision to "indefinitely" postpone the Lebanese-born artist's exhibition at the Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA).

The show, titled "Stolon Press: Flat Earth" and organized by the Sydney-based art and publishing collective Stolon Press, was scheduled to open in May for a duration of 18 months, presenting Sabsabi's work alongside that of writer-anthropologist Elisa Taber.

A university spokesperson vaguely cited a need to "deepen [MUMA's] collaboration and engagement with this exhibition" as a reason for the postponement, and that shelving the event would "allow this important work to be undertaken." The institution did not specify whether the verdict was related to Creative Australia dropping Sabsabi and curator Michael Dagostino from the forthcoming Venice Biennale.

Since February, Creative Australia has faced intense criticism from both domestic and international art communities for rescinding Sabsabi's appointment. In a recent interview with *The Guardian*, Sabsabi expressed fears that the reputational damage caused by the fiasco will "dismantle" his career, yet he and Dagostino remain determined to independently showcase their Venice Biennale project. After announcing that they would "seek community support to make this happen," the duo has now started an online crowdfunding campaign to finance their canceled exhibition.

Portrait of **YASMEEN LARI**. Courtesy gestalten, Berlin.

AWARDS

On March 4, Liu Jiakun was awarded the 54th Pritzker Architecture Prize for his masterful integration of traditional Chinese elements with contemporary design.

The following month, the Dia Art Foundation and Sam Gilliam Foundation jointly presented their 2025 Sam Gilliam Award to Indian mixed-media and installation artist Sheela Gowda.

On April 15, the French embassy in the UAE honored Hoor Al Qasimi, president and director of the Sharjah Art Foundation, with the Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters for her contributions to the arts in France and abroad.

Portrait of **LIU JIAKUN**. Courtesy the Hyatt Foundation and the Pritzker Architecture Prize.

OBITUARIES

On March 2, Indian modernist Himmat Shah, renowned for his bronze and terracotta sculptures of elongated human heads, passed away in Jaipur, aged 92.

Within the same month, Japanese artist Tatsumi Orimoto, who examined communication problems in modern society through photography, performance, and relational aesthetics, passed away at the age of 78.

On April 19, Belgian philanthropist and business mogul Guy Ullens—pioneering collector of contemporary Chinese art and co-founder of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing—died of natural causes at the age of 90.

Portrait of **GUY ULLENS**. Courtesy UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing.

Australian Arts in Crisis

BY ELIZABETH ANN MACGREGOR

Portrait of (left) **KHALED SABSABI** and (right) **MICHAEL DAGOSTINO**. Photo by Anna Kucera. Courtesy Creative Australia.

On February 7, Adrian Collette, CEO of the national arts council Creative Australia, announced that artist Khaled Sabsabi and curator Michael Dagostino, director of the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney, would represent Australia next year at the 61st Venice Biennale. “We are proud to support this extraordinary team,” Collette said. “Khaled Sabsabi’s work . . . reflects the diversity and plurality of Australia’s rich culture, and will spark meaningful conversations with audiences around the world.”

Less than a week later, the commission was cancelled on the grounds that it would create an unacceptable risk to public support for the arts. What happened in those intervening six days has been the subject of much debate.

A column in *The Australian* newspaper, behind a paywall, criticized the selection of the artist based on a video installation seen online—*You* (2007), which contains footage of the late Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Soon opposition senator Claire Chandler, citing both *You* and *Thank You Very Much* (2006), an 18-second video that features clips of the 9/11 attacks and US President George W. Bush’s response, protested in parliament against tax-supported funding for Sabsabi. Collette then called an emergency meeting of the Creative Australia board, and the appointment was rescinded.

This saga has raised huge issues. What impact did the arts minister, Tony Burke, have when he publicly voiced concern over the online images and immediately called Collette? Why did the board not give the artistic team a chance to respond or even take legal advice? Why such a hasty decision? From the alarmist evidence Collette gave when questioned at a Senate hearing a week later, you would think that hordes were waiting at the gates, about to destroy the social cohesion of the country.

The reasons Creative Australia gave for its reversal are clearly absurd. How could the CEO know what the public reaction to the work would be? To make such a decision based on images seen on the internet, criticized in one newspaper column, and then exploited by a politician point-scoring against the government on the eve of an election is beyond belief. Many curators have attested that Sabsabi is an artist who cares deeply about the issues he examines, and that far from inciting hatred or supporting ideologies, he attempts to bring greater understanding to complex situations. Public galleries face media-confected controversy from time to time. But public response is nuanced, varied, and generally open-minded. Art cannot be judged from a few images online.

The reaction of the art world has been one of outrage at the appalling treatment of the highly respected artist and curator. Artist Lindy Lee resigned the morning after the reversal meeting. Mikala Tai, Creative Australia’s director of visual arts, quickly followed suit, as did program manager Tahmina Maskinyar. The five remaining shortlisted artists declared that they would not participate in place of Sabsabi. About 3,000 artists, writers, curators, and academics signed a petition urging Creative Australia to reinstate the ousted duo, a call seconded by the National Association for the Arts. Yet on February 20, Collette and Creative Australia chair Robert Morgan announced that the decision would not be reversed.

Had the board taken time to consider the implications of the decision, this debacle might have been prevented. Instead, Creative Australia now faces the total loss of confidence of the visual arts sector, huge damage to Australia’s reputation, and the threat of an empty pavilion in 2026.

Representatives of other art forums have also expressed outrage. The Creative Australia Act 2023, requires the body to “uphold and promote freedom of expression in the arts and to support Australian arts practice that reflects the diversity of Australia.” Pressure has therefore mounted for Collette and Morgan to resign.

The terms of Creative Australia’s announced review, led by lawyers focusing on the selection process and “associated matters,” is also troubling. Will the rescinding of the decision be considered? Creative Australia relies on peer assessment—what criteria will be applied to the whole system in future, if the rigorous use of external experts is undermined in this case? Will all past work now have to be scrutinized, in case it can be misinterpreted online? Will support go only to artists who don’t raise questions, or deal with difficult issues? The selection process delivered Australia the Golden Lion in the last Biennale, for First Nations artist Archie Moore. Sabsabi is an Australian artist of Lebanese descent.

Unfortunately, our major public art galleries, with the exception of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, have not joined the campaign to support the artist. This deafening silence may have something to do with the increasing corporatization of arts boards generally. In late March, the Monash University Museum of Art in Melbourne “indefinitely postponed” a group show by Sabsabi and associated artists.

This lamentable saga is not going to go away, however much the decision-makers may wish so. Only last year, the Labor government was lauded for its new National Cultural Policy—“Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place.” In the hands of the current leadership of Creative Australia, only *some* stories seem to have a place, and only with the approval of certain media commentators and politicians.

[Editor’s note: This report reflects the situation in Australia as of early April 2025. Given the rapidly evolving nature of events, some details may have changed by the time of publication.]

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Sunny Optimism in Shadowy Times

BY DT

On the eve of Art Basel Hong Kong, art lovers on long-haul flights from all over the globe took a pit stop in Bangkok. The land of smiles melted cynically smug art dealers and collectors alike. Newish initiatives and soon-to-be-realized private museums tickle imaginations. Bangkok Kunsthalle, despite a modest 2024 debut, with abstract films by Michel Auder and a dark but Instagrammable installation by Korakrit Arunanondchai, now exhibits paintings, including rare works by Thai outsider ink practitioner Tang Chang and new colorful abstractions by Xie Fan. Word is the venue is looking for more partnerships, having mounted the latter show in collaboration with Xie Fan's gallery, Marguo. In February, the Kunsthalle's founder, **Marisa Chearavanont**, unveiled her Khao Yai Art Forest on 160 acres of untouched forested hills, which she envisions as Thailand's Naoshima. Chearavanont is embracing ambitious land art projects, including a massive Louise Bourgeois spider (courtesy an indefinite loan from the Easton Foundation) and a hidden bar by **Elmgreen and Dragset**.

Marisa Chearavanont

But the local buzz is all about the decades-long, anticipated grand opening of Dib Bangkok. Due to launch in December, the 6,600-square meter warehouse-turned-private art institution has been gestating since 2006, under previous names "B-Mu" and "O Museum," thanks to its late founder **Petch Osathanugrah**. The much loved and highly eccentric art collector, who died unexpectedly in 2023, made sure that all the physical hardware—including climate control in one of the most humid cities on the planet—was in place to properly showcase what is said to be a multimillion-dollar art collection that he amassed since the 1990s.

Petch Osathanugrah

Suddenly, other private "museums" are allegedly in the works in the beach town of Phuket, swarming with tourists and typically avoided by the art crowd due to its tacky resorts and lack of culture. But now that the Thailand Biennale has announced its fourth edition will open there in November, newbie Thai collectors are scrambling for similar visibility by launching namesake vanity projects. These include "Raya" Underwater Art Museum, spearheaded by artist **Chalermchai Kositpipat** and the Phuket Art Association. Of course, no art scene is complete without an art fair: look to Bangkok-based marketing honcho Paul Poole to opportunistically float the Phuket Art Fair. Bring your bikini and your baht and boldly go where no one has gone before!

In Hong Kong, Art Basel dinners were dominated by doomsday chatter about the conservative, ultra-right-wing tendencies in the US and Europe. Visitors from America asked locals where to buy cheap burner phones, concerned that US Customs and Border Protection might confiscate them after returning from the Chinese financial center to their liberal urban bubbles.

Chiming in, Europe-based curators, collectors, and gallerists gabbed about the uptick in EU visa applications by Americans, and added how Asia, especially Hong Kong, feels like a cozy option, especially as Brexit in the UK and the far right in Germany continue their gloomy effects on art and culture. Reflecting the new normal, Hong Kong welcomed back **Nick Yu**, formerly programs head of London's Asymmetry Art Foundation, and independent curator **Inti Guerrero**, previously based in Berlin. Even Elon Musk's daughter **Vivian Jenna Wilson** has been seen in Tokyo, where she has recently decamped and disassociated herself from Elonald.

Nick Yu

Collectors from China continue to shop in Hong Kong. Defying expectations, Tang Contemporary sold a multi-grinning **Yue Minjun** for over USD 1 million, along with a single smile in shades of royal blue and bright yellow—its new owner liked that it resembled Ukraine's flag—for six figures. Old is new it seems, momentarily feeling like it was the rollicking 2000s not vigilant 2025. And it wasn't just blue-chips that were grabbed up. **Yuko Mohri**'s rotting fruit sculptures enticed the adventurous, and sold out at Mother's Tankstation in Dublin.

Making an impression were the younger Chinese patrons, known to be keen on everything top quality—from contemporary to antique. Many run their family's "tiny" private museums, but are decidedly taking a modest approach during these curious times. A group of friends led by the thoughtful and effervescent **Kairong Zhang**, founder of the ZHI Foundation in Beijing, charmed museum trustees from the US and the UK (while ignoring the Trump rhetoric) at gatherings hosted by the Guggenheim and Tate Modern with their earnestness about wanting to support local artists.

One place likely to be cooling on art fairs is Singapore—and it has nothing to do with Art Basel Hong Kong. Neither of the city-state's fairs, Art SG and the jewel-sized SEA Focus, can compete (nor can Xianggang or MCH—the owners of the Swiss fair) with the money pouring in from mega pop concerts. Last year, Singapore pocketed over USD 200 million from exclusively staging Taylor Swift's Asia gig. The government shrewdly paid her nearly USD 20 million for the privilege. Punters expect similar earnings when **Lady Gaga** lands in Singapore in May. Who knew the Lady would live up to her lyrics, "One second, I'm a Koons fan, then suddenly, the Koons is me!"

Lady Gaga

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CHRISTIE'S
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Christie's evening sale of 20th and 21st century art at its Asia Pacific headquarters in The Henderson, Hong Kong, on March 28, 2025. Courtesy Christie's Images Ltd.

As Art Basel Hong Kong concluded on March 30, all eyes turned to the major auction houses, where both Christie's and Sotheby's had aligned their spring marquee sales with the fair for the first time. Would the fair's energy and robust attendance—which was considered across the board as a bellwether for a recovering market—translate into bidding in the auction room? Do the back-to-back sales offer any insights about collector confidence across Greater China?

HONG KONG

Christie's evening sale of 20th and 21st century art on March 28 in Hong Kong delivered generally positive signals about the Asian art market, bringing in HKD 560 million (USD 72 million) with fees. The house drew over 7,000 visitors to its pre-auction exhibitions amid the busy March art week.

The evening saw a 95-percent sell-through rate, with 39 of 41 lots finding buyers. In spite of this, most works only sold at or near their low estimates, with the total hammer price of HKD 457.3 million (USD 58.8 million) landing just six percent above the sale's aggregate low estimate.

As the sale's sole eight-figure lot, Jean-Michel Basquiat's vibrant *Sabado por la Noche (Saturday Night)* (1984) claimed the evening's top spot, selling to an Asian collector for HKD 112.6 million (USD 14.5 million) with fees. The result represents a healthy gain for the seller, who purchased the work at Christie's London in 2019 for USD 10 million.

Modern masters performed at a steady pace, with Zao Wou-Ki's *28.8.67* (1967) achieving HKD 48.8 million (USD 6.27 million) as the evening's second-highest-valued lot. René Magritte's *Rêverie de Monsieur James* (1943) sold at HKD 47.6 million (USD 6.1 million), while Pierre-Auguste Renoir's sun-drenched *La Promenade au bord de la mer (Le Bois de la Chaise Noirmoutier)* (1892) exceeded its high estimate of HKD 28 million (USD 3.6 million) to reach HKD 34.86 million (4.5 million). The offering of European works continued with a Magritte gouache and watercolor work, *La clairvoyance* (c. 1962), which sold at HKD 28.8 million (USD 3.7 million), while a small Marc Chagall from 1975–78, entitled *Autour de l'equilibriste*, found a buyer at HKD 14.9 million (USD 1.9 million).

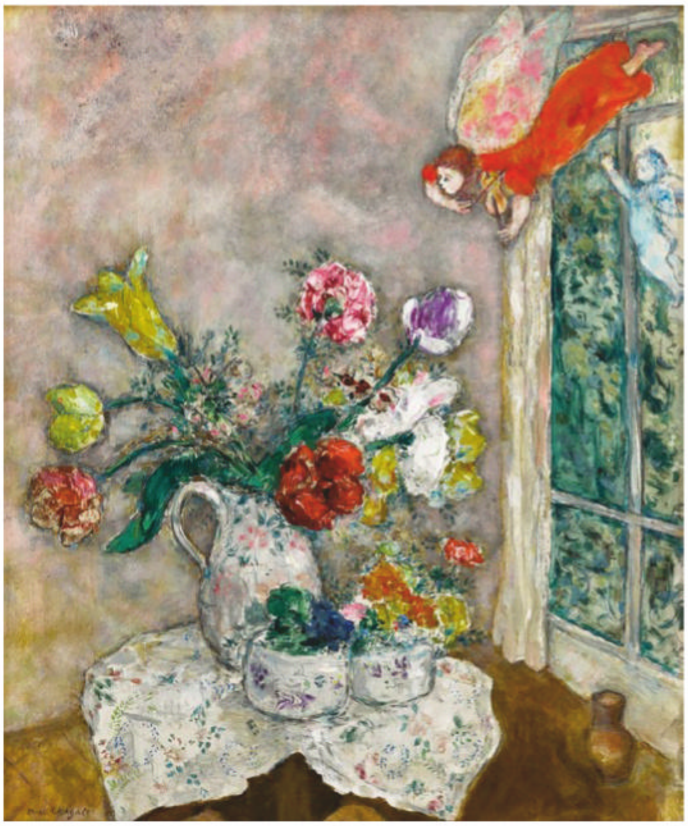
On the contemporary front, blue-chip staple Yayoi Kusama's warm yellow pumpkin painting, *PUMPKIN (HRU)* (2014), raked in HKD 39 million (USD 5.1 million), exceeding its high estimate of HKD 35 million (HKD 4.5 million). Chinese artist Zhang Enli's 2002 triptych *Intimacy* set a new artist record at HKD 23.4 million (USD 3 million), despite landing within estimates. Romanian artist Adrian Ghenie's *Untitled (After Henri Rousseau)* (2020) sparked heated bidding, soaring past its HKD 15 million (USD 1.93 million) high estimate to reach HKD 23.4 million (USD 3 million). Several other contemporary works matched or surpassed expectations: Antony Gormley's *State II* (2011) sold for HKD 6.55 million (USD 843,210), Lee Ufan's *East Winds* (1983) for HKD 6 million (USD 778,350), and Izumi Kato's *Untitled* (2008) for HKD 2.5 million (USD 324,300) against a HKD 2 million (USD 257,840) high estimate.

The sale was swift, lasting for about an hour, and was not without its disappointments. An untitled Yayoi Kusama canvas, dated 1970, failed to find a buyer against estimates of HKD 12 to 18 million (USD 1.5 to 2.3 million)—a signal of collectors' increasingly selective approach, even for established artists. Overall, the sales figures indicate an art market still in its recovery phase, with the evening's overall total reaching just over half of what the house achieved in its inaugural sale at The Henderson last September.

Over at Sotheby's, the evening sale on March 29 totaled HKD 297.6 million (USD 38.2 million), which was just over 50 percent of Christie's equivalent sale, despite the house reporting 35,000 visitors to its pre-sale exhibition—significantly higher than Christie's numbers. 40 of 42 lots sold for a 95-percent sell-through rate, not including four withdrawals.

European masters delivered reliable results. Chagall's *Fleurs de printemps (La Cruche aux fleurs de printemps)* (1930) claimed the top lot position at HKD 34.5 million (USD 4.5 million), setting a new Asian auction record for the artist. Other stable performances included Henry Moore's *Working Model for Reclining Figure: Prop* (1976) at HKD 20.5 million (USD 2.6 million), Pablo Picasso's *Le miroir* (1947) at HKD 18.7 million (USD 2.4 million), and Renoir's *Baigneuse accoudée* (1882) at HKD 23.6 million (USD 3 million).

Following the slowdown in Chinese spending, results



MARC CHAGALL, *Fleurs de printemps (La Cruche aux fleurs de printemps)*, 1930, oil on canvas, 72 × 60.6 cm. Courtesy Sotheby's Hong Kong.

for Chinese modernists demonstrated slightly adjusted price levels. Zao Wou-Ki's *31.08.2001–09.09.2002* (2001–02) sold within its estimate at HKD 14.4 million (USD 1.85 million), while Chu Teh-Chun's *Neige de mai* (1986–87) reached the high end of its estimate at HKD 8.3 million (USD 1.1 million). Two Wu Guanzhong paintings, *A garden of Suzhou* (1977) and *Snow in Beijing* (1978), achieved HKD 9.53 million (USD 1.2 million) and HKD 7.9 million (USD 1 million), respectively. Among contemporary artists, Yayoi Kusama's sculpture *Starry Pumpkin* (2019) achieved HKD 15 million (USD 1.9 million), just shy of its low estimate. Nicholas Party's pastel *Grotto* (2019) matched its high estimate at HKD 15 million (USD 1.9 million), showing positive signs despite the artist's relatively quiet 2024.

Emerging and Southeast Asian artists saw some significant results. Chinese artist Ji Xin's Piero della Francesca-inspired painting *Dawn* (2021) achieved HKD 2.5 million (USD 327,000), while Li Hei Di, who recently joined Pace gallery's roster, saw her painting sell for HKD 1.4 million (USD 180,000). Vietnamese painter Mai Trung Thứ's two works surpassed expectations, one nearly doubling its high estimate.

SHANGHAI

Following closely on the heels of a subdued yet steady Hong Kong sale, Christie's Shanghai evening sale of 20th and 21st century art on April 3—the house's first major contemporary art auction in mainland China this year—perhaps unsurprisingly delivered underwhelming results. The hour-plus sale achieved CNY 78.7 million (USD 10 million), with only 40 of 53 lots finding buyers and a meager 75.4-percent sell-through rate.

Zeng Fanzhi's *Mask Series No. 4* (1997), from his iconic mask paintings, claimed the evening's top spot at CNY 17.85 million (USD 2.3 million), reaching the upper bounds of its CNY 10 to 18 million (USD 1.3 to 2.3 million) estimate. Another Asian master that performed well was Kazuo Shiraga, whose 1966 gestural work *Outo Shoukou* fetched CNY 11.8 million (USD 1.5 million) against a high estimate of CNY 10 million (USD 1.3 million).

The evening's most significant pass was Zao Wou-Ki's *Zitterlein* (1956), which was estimated at CNY 20 to 30 million (USD 2.6 to USD 3.9 million). Blue-chip artists and European masters performed decently: Yayoi Kusama's *Sunflower* (1987) realized CNY 5.7 million (USD 729,800), while Giorgio de Chirico's *Sgombero su piazza d'Italia* (1968) exceeded its high estimate to achieve CNY 4.2 million (USD 535,410).

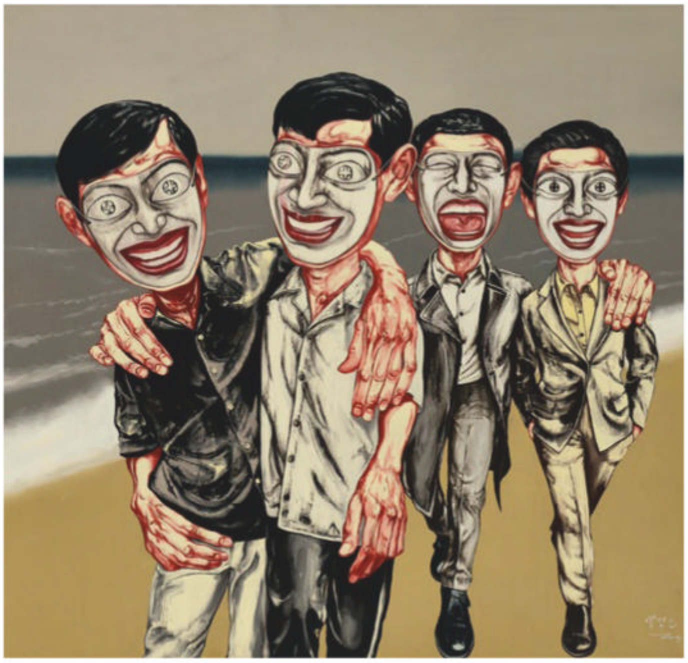
Most notably, Chinese contemporary artists born in the 1950s and '60s demonstrated some kind of a revival. Zhou Chunya's vivid *Peach Blossom No. 2* (2005) surpassed expectations at CNY 2.9 million (USD 371,955), while Ding Yi's intricate *Appearance of Crosses 2018-7* (2018) reached CNY 1.5 million (USD 194,350). Zhang Enli, who set a record in the house's Hong Kong sale a few evenings ago, continued the momentum with *Wash Off the Dyeware* (2012), which achieved CNY 1.1 million (USD 137,720), well above its CNY 680,000 (USD 87,520) high estimate.

The market was more challenging for midcareer Chinese artists. Chen Ke's triptych *Yesterday's Me, Tomorrow's You* (2012) failed to attract bidders at its opening price of CNY 10 million (USD 1.3 million), while works by Wei Jia and Jia Aili also went unsold.

While prized names continued to find steady support, the varying results point to a more discerning market. As Southeast Asian collectors emerge as significant players and the region's art scene gains prominence, questions arise about how these shifting dynamics will reshape the auction landscape. How will burgeoning art hubs influence the region's market preferences? Which artists will maintain their presence, and which might fade from the spotlight? These questions await answers in the seasons ahead.

LOUIS LU

ZENG FANZHI, *Mask Series No. 4*, 1997, oil on linen, 169 × 199 cm. Courtesy Christie's Images Ltd.



View of Art Basel Hong Kong, 2025. Courtesy Art Basel.

New Narratives

HONG KONG

As Asia's art calendar becomes increasingly crowded, discussions surrounding Hong Kong's position as the region's premier art hub have intensified in recent years. The 12th edition of Art Basel Hong Kong presented some intriguing insights and steady sales across sectors, indicating a measured return of market confidence.

The year's edition gathered 240 galleries from 42 countries, with Asia-Pacific galleries comprising more than half the participants—the highest representation from the region to date. With the expanded presence of Southeast Asian and African galleries, this shift mirrors the art world's increasing attention on the "Global South."

Blue-chip galleries reported significant sales across the board. Hauser & Wirth placed Louise Bourgeois's bronze sculpture *Cove* (1988/cast 2010) with a collector in Asia for USD 2 million, coinciding with the artist's solo exhibition "Soft Landscape" at the gallery's Hong Kong location, and a touring major survey from Tokyo's Mori Museum to Taipei's Fubon Museum. The gallery also reported sales of Zeng Fanzhi's *Untitled* (2024) for USD 1.5 million, and Christina Quarles's *Push'm Lil' Daisies, Make'm Come Up* (2020) for USD 1.35 million. Two works by new gallery addition Lee Bul—an intricate leather-clad sculpture and an acrylic diptych—sold for USD 275,000 and USD 260,000 respectively, to a European foundation. David Zwirner reported one of the fair's highest sales, raking in USD 3.5 million for Yayoi Kusama's *INFINITY-NETS [ORUPX]* (2013). The gallery also sold Michaël Borremans's *Bob* (2025) for USD 1.6 million, as well as Elizabeth Peyton's *Happy Together (WKW)* (2022–24) and Félix González-Torres's diaphanous blue curtain piece *Untitled (Loverboy)* (1989), each for USD 900,000.

White Cube reported sales of two of Antony Gormley's figurative sculptures, *OPEN GUT* (2023) and *HOIST II* (2019), ranging from USD 650,000 to USD 1.3 million. Also sold within a similar price range was Tracey Emin's large-scale bronze *There was so much more of me* (2019). At Pace, Lee Ufan's *With Winds* (1991) sold for USD 950,000, while two Alicja Kwade pieces, *Little Triple Be-Hide* (2023) and *Little Be-Hide* (2024), presented at the gallery's booth concurrent with the artist's first solo exhibition at Tai Kwun, traded at USD 73,400 each. Perrotin sold Takashi Murakami's new acrylic and gold leaf painting *Tan Tan Bo: Wormhole* (2025) for USD 1.35 million. Thaddaeus Ropac reported several high-value transactions, including Roy Lichtenstein's *Water Lily Pond with Reflections* (1992), an enamel screenprint on processed and swirled stainless steel, which sold for USD 1.5 million, and Georg Baselitz's seated double portrait *Luise, Lilo, Franz und Johannes* (2010), which sold for EUR 1.2 million (USD 1.3 million). Additionally, the gallery sold Robert Rauschenberg's 1989 *original artwork for First International Festival of Asian Film* to a Chinese museum at USD 200,000. At Gladstone's booth, Anicka Yi's crowd-pleasing light installation *Thorn* (2023–24) found a buyer at USD 225,000. The work is from Yi's *Radiolaria* series (2023–24), which featured both at Seoul's Leeum Museum last year and her recently opened survey at UCCA in Beijing.

Asian galleries and artists demonstrated a strong presence. Kukje sold a 2004 mixed-media canvas by Park Seo-Bo for between USD 540,000 and USD 648,000, while Ha Chong-Hyun's *Conjunction 22-03* (2022) fetched between USD 390,000 and USD 468,000. At Sprüth Magers, two tempera-on-canvas works by Hyun-Sook Song sold for EUR 65,000 (USD 70,200) each to an Asian collector, while two pieces by Mire Lee, fresh from her recent Tate Modern Turbine Hall commission, fetched EUR 45,000 (USD 48,600) and EUR 30,000 (USD 32,400), respectively. Tina Kim Gallery sold two colorful Pacita Abad trapunto works, with *The Far Side of Apo Island* (1989) selling between USD 250,000 and USD 500,000, and *Twenty-Five Meters Down on Layag-Layag Reef* (1986) between USD 100,000 and USD 250,000.

Museums and institutional acquisitions appeared to focus on works by Asian artists. Hong Kong's M+ museum acquired Yibei Zhang's *There is everything in our bonfire* (2024) from Shanghai's BANK Gallery for USD 25,000. A Chinese museum acquired Lee ShinJa's textile piece *Joining* (1981) from Tina Kim Gallery for USD 200,000. The gallery, together with Silverlens, also sold Pacita Abad's *Through the Looking Glass* (1996) to a Southeast Asian museum for a reported sum of USD 500,000. Abad's work was one of three large-scale paintings presented in the fair's Encounters sector.

Singapore's Ames Yavuz Gallery reported strong interest in Thai artist Pinaree Sanpitak's works. Her two large-scale pieces from 2003, *Silver Offering I* and *Silver Offering II*, featuring the artist's iconic breast shape in silver leaf against opalescent acrylic backgrounds, each went for USD 350,000. The gallery also placed three works by First Nations artist Betty Muffler in the USD 40,000 to USD 60,000 range. ShanghART sold Mengyun Han's ink, acrylic, white gold leaf on canvas entitled *Fruit of Tranquility* (2024) to an Asian museum for USD 60,000.

Throughout the fair, textile-based works drew attention across multiple booths, suggesting growing interest in craft-based approaches. Notable presentations included Igshaan Adams at Blank Projects' Kabinett booth, Samuel Nnorom at Retro Africa, Josep Grau-Garriga at Sabrina Amrani, Lin Tianmiao at Vanguard Gallery, and Duyi Han at BANK. As a medium that bridges traditional craftsmanship and contemporary expression, textile-based works emphasize materiality and labor, offering an intriguing counterpoint to digital and AI-driven artworks.

This dialogue between the tactile and the virtual was evident in the Encounters sector, which showcased large-scale projects. Alexie Glass-Kantor, who has curated the Encounters since 2018, concluded her final edition with a selection of works focusing on the pressing issues shaping human experience today. These ranged from Indigenous sovereignty and environmentalism to contemporary digital culture. Highlights included Movana Chen's *Deconstructing* (2004–08), which transformed old printed matters into a monumental tapestry, as well as Chinese artist Lu Yang's large-scale multimedia installation *DOKU the Creator* (2025), including affordable NFTs, which drew large crowds. Presented by De Sarthe and COMA, *DOKU the Creator* postulates a cyber-dystopia through AI-driven animation, exploring themes of human civilization, commodification, and technological spectacle.

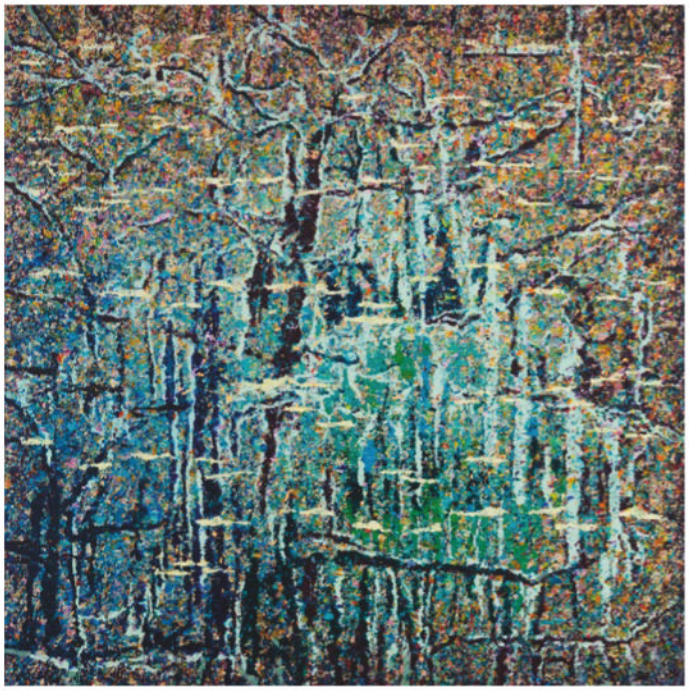
Hong Kong galleries brought diverse presentations to the fair. Blindspot Gallery's booth featured videos, photography, sculptures, and installations, including works by Sin Wai Kin, who had a solo exhibition at the gallery, and Wing Po So, whose solo exhibition was at nonprofit Para Site. Empty Gallery celebrated its tenth anniversary with works by Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork, Doris Guo, Tishan Hsu, Taro Masushio, Henry Shum, Rafael Vunkwan Tam, and Cici Wu. Kiang Malingue presented works by over 20 artists, including new projects by Brook Hsu, the late Cho Yong-Ik, Nabuqi, Miao Ying, Su-Mei Tse, and Yu Ji. Brook Hsu's ink-on-canvas work sold to an Asian foundation for USD 45,000. Rossi & Rossi dedicated its booth to the late Iranian American artist Siah Armajani and Hong Kong artist Szelit Cheung's modestly priced canvases of corridors, while first-time participant PHD Group showcased Michele Chu's solo presentation "Kitchen," a meditation on food, ritual, memory, and loss. Chu's sensorial installations transform personal objects into an intimate memorial to her late mother.

Among the Chinese galleries participating in Art Basel Hong Kong was Antenna Space, whose booth presented a new generation of female artists from the gallery program, including Korean artist Mire Lee, as well as Shuang Li, who had a solo exhibition at Shanghai's Prada Rong Zhai in 2024. The booth also featured a series of works by Evelyn Taocheng Wang, who was recently awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize. Beijing Commune spotlighted a broad range of Chinese artists, including Song Dong, Yin Xiuzhen, and Zhang Xiaogang, among others, with a special curation of Wang Guangle's abstract paintings in their Kabinett sector.

Beyond the familiar narrative of "cautious optimism" reflected in sales figures and crowd energy, it may be time to explore a more nuanced perspective. From Singaporean artist Ho Tzu Nyen's AI-generated homage to Hong Kong cinema on the M+ facade to the fair's engagement with the "Global South" narrative, and nonprofit spaces and local galleries showcasing the city's vibrant art scene, Hong Kong's perceived competition with Seoul and Singapore might be less relevant than its evolving role as a platform for meaningful dialogue among a diversity of art worlds—local, regional, and global. What we are witnessing could be more than just a market recovery; it may signify the emergence of a robust cultural ecosystem.

LOUIS LU

Installation view of **PACITA ABAD** and **PIO ABAD**'s *The Sky is the Limit*, 1996–2000, mixed media, dimensions variable, at Art Basel Hong Kong, 2025. Courtesy Art Basel.



ZENG FANZHI, *Untitled*, 2024, oil on canvas, 220 × 220 cm. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth, Hong Kong.

PREVIEWS

MAY 1–JUN 22

MEAD GALLERY, COVENTRY

Mao Ishikawa

The Mead Gallery at Warwick Arts Centre presents an extensive survey of works by Mao Ishikawa, marking the Okinawan photographer's first institutional exhibition in Europe. Renowned for her raw shots of Okinawa—which was controlled by the US until 1972 and remains a base for American troops today—Ishikawa captured powerful images of the margins of Japanese society for nearly half a century. The exhibition spotlights 60 works from her photographic oeuvre since the 1970s, including her iconic *Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa* series (1975–77) along with more recent projects such as *Fences, Okinawa* (1989–) and *My Family* (2001–05).

Image from **MAO ISHIKAWA**'s *Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa* series, 1975–77, photograph, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist.

MAY 1–OCT 19

TATE MODERN, LONDON

Do Ho Suh
The Genesis Exhibition: Walk the House

Installation view of **DO HO SUH**'s *Hub* series, 2015– , at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, 2022. Photo by Jessica Maurer. Courtesy the artist; Lehmann Maupin, New York/Seoul/London; and Victoria Miro, London/Venice.

Marking the Seoul-born artist's first solo show in London in over 20 years, "The Genesis Exhibition: Walk the House" at Tate Modern presents Do Ho Suh's large-scale, translucent fabric installations from the last three decades alongside newly commissioned site-specific works that explore themes of home, memory, and displacement. The survey also features drawings, video works, and sculptures that trace Suh's evolving engagement with migration, identity, and the psychological dimensions of architectural space, thus challenging our perception of permanence and belonging.

MAY 10–AUG 17

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Heman Chong
This is a dynamic list and may never be able to satisfy particular standards for completeness

A key figure in Singapore's contemporary art scene, Heman Chong works at the intersection of image, performance, and writing, weaving together conceptual precision with societal critique. Known for his sharp wit, Chong interrogates institutional infrastructures through a political lens to examine how, in a hyperconnected world, our everyday lives are subtly regulated by systems of power that define physical accessibility and social exclusion. This survey at the Singapore Art Museum charts the last two decades of his ever-evolving practice, bringing together works made in 2003 alongside new commissions that reflect his ongoing engagement with sociopolitical realities.

HEMAN CHONG, *Perimeter Walk*, 2013–24, series of 550 offset printed postcards of images captured along the perimeter of Singapore, 9.5 × 13.8 cm each. Courtesy the artist.

View of **ON KAWARA**'s studio in New York, 1966. Photo by One Million Years Foundation. Courtesy Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong.

MAY 23–AUG 17

TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY, HONG KONG

On Kawara *Rule of Freedom, Freedom of Rules*

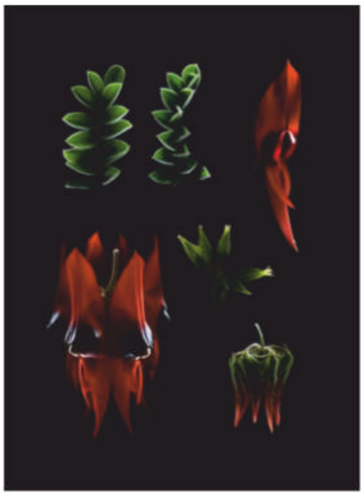
"Rule of Freedom, Freedom of Rules" at Hong Kong's Tai Kwun Contemporary marks the first institutional solo exhibition in Asia for the late Japanese conceptual artist On Kawara. Co-curated by Hou Hanru and Ying Kwok, the show charts five decades of Kawara's practice, focusing on his systematic approach to order and documentation. Alongside the artist's signature date paintings from his *Today* series (1966–2013), various postcards, telegrams, CDs, and other archival materials highlight his days in Hong Kong and the city's influence on his process of recording time, presence, and daily routines.

JUN 6–AUG 3

4A CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART, SYDNEY

Man&Wah *Propagate/Germinate/Bloom*

With "Propagate/Germinate/Bloom," Sydney's 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art continues to support Asian Australian dialogues, this time on an ecological theme. Compiling research on historical uses of botany in medicine, cuisine, and culture, the exhibition delves into plant migrations from Asia to Australia, providing grounds for a collective meditation on our co-existence with nature. Commissioned for the show, Brisbane-based artist duo Man&Wah present a series of immersive soundscapes, visual projections, hyperreal terrariums, and large-scale botanical installations, transforming the 4A space into an otherworldly environment.



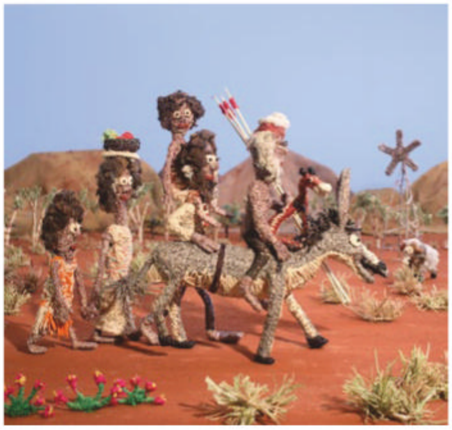
MAN&WAH, *Sturt's Desert Pea*, 2024, photo montage, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artists.

JUN 24–SEP 21

ARTIZON MUSEUM, TOKYO

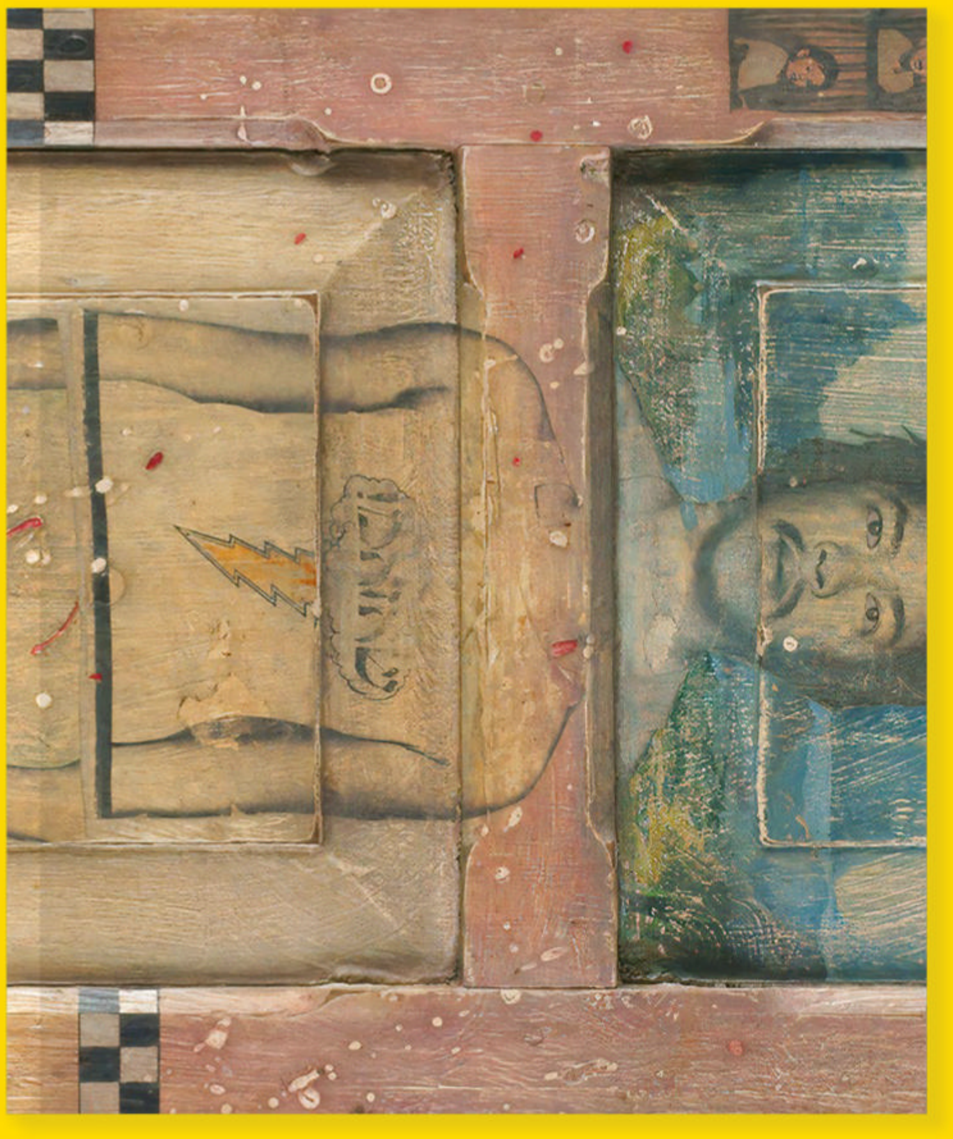
Echoes Unveiled: Art by First Nations Women from Australia

"Echoes Unveiled" is Artizon Museum's first presentation of works by First Nations women artists. Highlighting the diversity of contemporary creative expressions—especially those deeply rooted in their regional context—"Echoes Unveiled" features projects by the Tjanpi Desert Weavers collective and seven Indigenous Australian artists, including the late painter Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori and glass artist Yhonnie Scarce. By situating these creatives and their works in a Japanese institution, Artizon aims to introduce First Nations art from Australia to a new Asian audience.



TJANPI DESERT WEAVERS, *Tangki (Donkey)*, 2021, still image of stop-motion animation: 6 min. Courtesy the artists.

SANTIAGO BOSE



Softcover with flaps
160 pages
247 illustrations
US$ 38

available at artasiapacific.com/shop

ArtAsiaPacific Foundation proudly presents *Santiago Bose Painter, Magician*. The book features an in-depth essay on the grandfather of Filipino art by curator, art historian, and critic Patrick Flores who sheds light on the artist's unique alchemy of technical virtuosity and philosophical depth. Accompanying Flores's essay is a biography of Bose by his daughter Lilledeshan, told through a study of self-portraits spanning the early 1970s up until his sudden death at 53 in 2002. The book title references Bose's self-description of his practice, "painter, magician," and is designed by acclaimed graphic designer and illustrator Paul Sahre.

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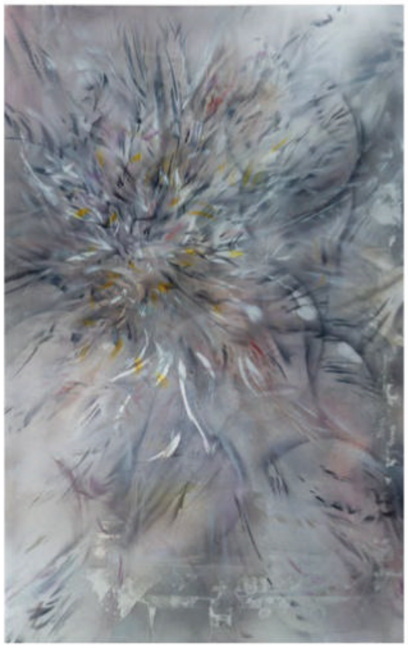
PAINTER, MAGICIAN

PEOPLE & IDEAS



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NEW CURRENTS

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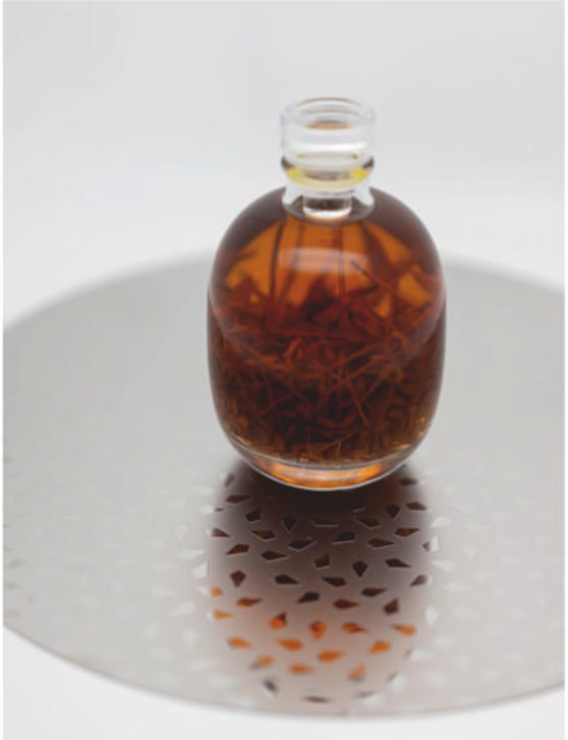
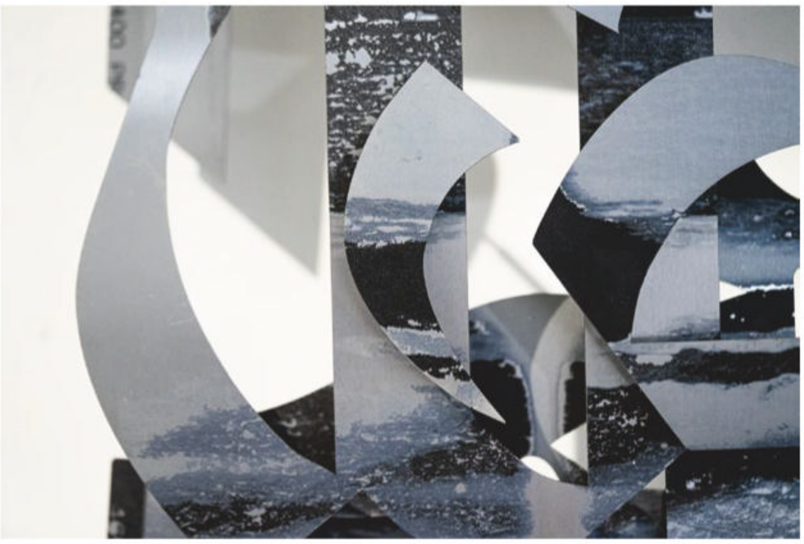

WEERA-IT ITTITEERARAK, *The flower is red, is sweet and is dead: ขอโทษ (apologies)*, 2022/24, vodka, wild Chinese Ixora without the androecium, glass bottle, 28.8 × 28.8 × 12.5 cm. Photo by Lok Hang Wu. Courtesy the artist and Podium Gallery, Hong Kong.


WEERA-IT ITTITEERARAK, *Empty Shore Echoes*, 2024, analog negative photograph printed on stainless steel, 40 × 40 × 14.5 cm. Courtesy the artist and Podium Gallery, Hong Kong.

Weera-it Ittiteerarak

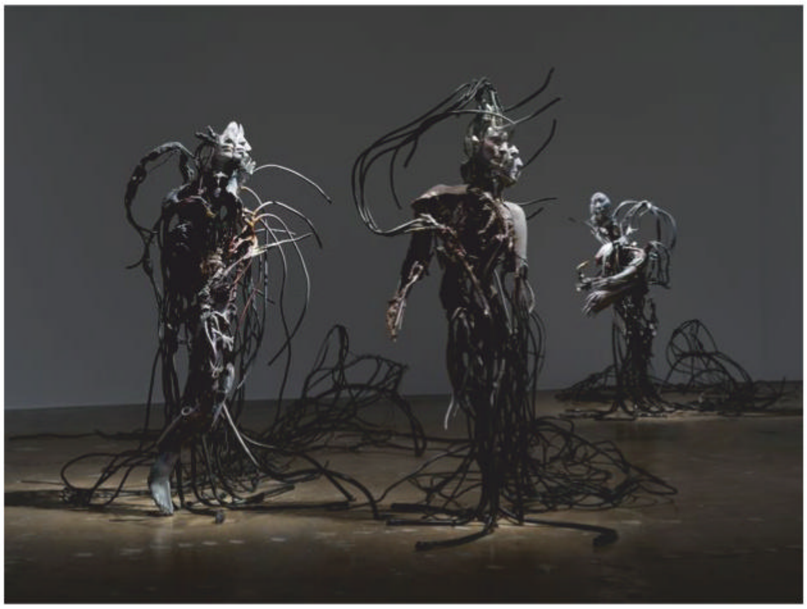
HONG KONG

Shrouded in darkness yet dramatically lit from within by LED lights, Weera-it Ittiteerarak's *In Absence, Duality Remains* (2024) is a wall-hung sculpture comprising two connected translucent resin doorknobs set against a mottled white marble tile. Shown recently in the group exhibition "History will say we were best friends" at Podium Gallery in Hong Kong, the Thai Chinese artist's work is an exploration of connectivity and detachment that draws from their father's final gesture of care—the replacement of a door lock. Transforming the cold silver knob from their childhood into its ethereal doppelgänger, the artist constructed a memento of affection and grief. As Ittiteerarak explains on their website, the connected knobs, resembling a small tunnel, symbolize "a bond that was both secure and distant, present and absent."

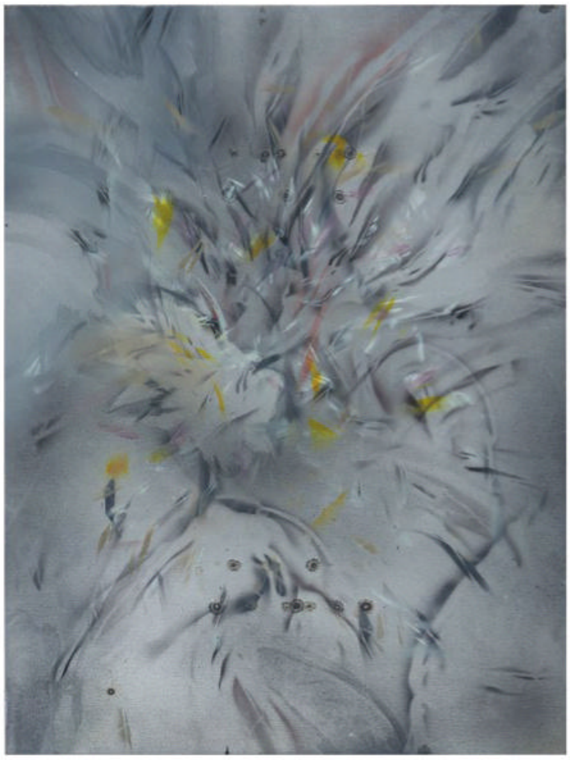
On the archival site stepbackforward, the Hong Kong-born Ittiteerarak calls their methodology "Romantic-realism," stating a desire to romanticize the physical world while rendering abstract meanings more concrete. Nostalgia pervades their work, which sometimes includes organic materials. *The flower is red, is sweet and is dead: ขอโทษ (apologies)* (2024) is a bottle containing vodka and ixora, a tenacious plant that is ubiquitous in Thailand and Hong Kong. When Ittiteerarak was young, they picked ixora flowers with their father to taste the nectar, a memory the artist now treasures. The act of homebrewing keeps the dead flowers "alive." *The flower is red*, a sweet recollection ready to be consumed, is at once a passageway to the artist's lost father and a channel between their two homes.

Ittiteerarak's pursuit of nostalgia continues in *Empty Shore Echoes* (2024), featuring analog negative photographs of seashores printed on stainless steel sheets. Shaped into forms resembling Thai calligraphy, the flowing sculptural elements are a poignant expression of yearning and loss. The fragmented images of waves direct our attention to the unseen, with the physical and cultural landscape of Thailand evoked by their calligraphic shapes. When we search for the past, *Empty Shore Echoes* suggests, our memories may be torn and twisted before reaching the shore of a new reality.

KAREN MAY WAI PLUMPTRE



Installation view of **YEIN LEE**'s *System of In-between State 1–3*, 2024, mixed media, dimensions variable, at the 15th Gwangju Biennale, 2024. Photo by Heoyu. Courtesy the artist.



YEIN LEE, *Flap 2*, 2025, galvanized steel plate, acrylic ink, lacquer, 40 × 30 cm. Photo by Lok Hang Wu. Courtesy the artist and Podium Gallery, Hong Kong.

Yein Lee

VIENNA

Yein Lee crafts bodies that are caught in the midst of metamorphosis—part flesh, part machine, poised between becoming and decay. Since relocating from Seoul to Vienna, she has developed a practice in which the natural and the synthetic merge, creating forms that evoke an uncertain future.

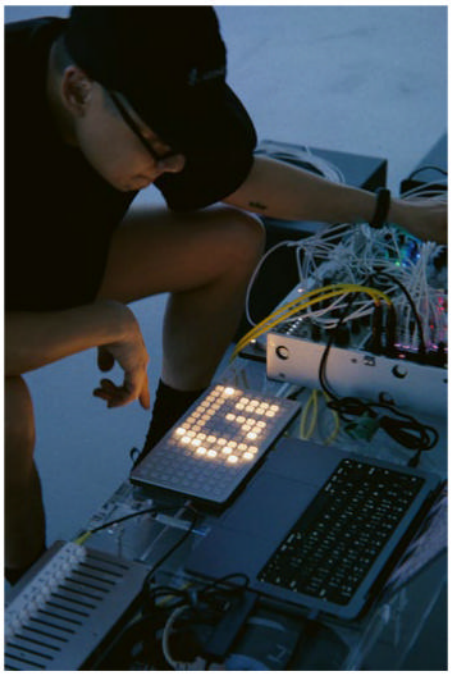
Lee's *System of In-between State 1–3* series (2024), commissioned for last year's 15th Gwangju Biennale, features life-size sculptures of otherworldly figures frozen in a state of perpetual transformation. Constructed from steel, polymer gypsum, fiberglass, silicone, and repurposed electronic debris, the quasi-human forms appear to erode without fully disintegrating. The creatures, sprouting industrial tendrils that circle back to ensnare them, are neither wholly organic nor entirely mechanical, resembling both evolutionary relics and nascent cybernetic beings. Rather than fusing technology with flesh, Lee orchestrates a tension between the two, generating dialogues about technological anxiety, ecological collapse, and the instability of existence.

Lee's recent paintings extend this inquiry to the unseen forces that shape our experience. In *Flap 1* and *Flap 2* (both 2025), her light staccato strokes on galvanized steel seem to manifest invisible cosmic vibrations. Inspired by American mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz's "butterfly effect," the theory that a slight change in initial conditions can cause huge long-term consequences, Lee's rhythmic gestures outline the ripples of small disturbances that have the potential to disrupt entire systems.

These two-dimensional works feel like visual echoes—ghostly traces of a trembling world. As her practice continues to evolve across disciplines, she maps not only the body in flux but the tremors of a universe in constant motion. No subject seems too large for her. "My confidence," she says, "is in my desire to explore more possibilities."

EFFY CAO

MAFMADMAF performing at **LIANG SHAOJI**'s solo exhibition "Sea of the Cloud", at Sea World Culture and Arts Center, Shenzhen, 2024. Courtesy the artist.



MAFMADMAF performing at **LIANG SHAOJI**'s solo exhibition "Sea of the Cloud," at Sea World Cultural and Arts Center, Shenzhen, 2024. Courtesy the artist.

MAFMADMAF participating in "Generative Matrix: The Recoding of Sound," at the Pingshan Art Museum, Shenzhen, 2025. Courtesy the artist.

Mafmadmaf

GUANGZHOU

How can nature's complex phenomena, or a cultural history, be translated into an auditory experience? Guangzhou-born multimedia artist and composer mafmadmaf (aka "maf") makes a dynamic attempt. Melding his interests in biology, design, and music into experimental sound and performance, maf draws inspiration from ecology and meteorology, as well as the culture and geography of his hometown. Often intersecting with visual arts, his sonic archive includes examples of minimal soundscapes and abstracted field recordings, employing feedback loops and modular synthesizers to warp sound into elaborate distortions.

Last year, maf delivered a live performance for Chinese artist Liang Shaoji's solo exhibition "Sea of the Cloud" at Shenzhen's Sea World Cultural and Arts Center. In the cavernous gallery space, maf presented a mesmeric 45-minute ambient set, incorporating field recordings of silkworms and industrial shipyard chains, to accompany Liang's silent multichannel video installation *Deeply Sea Horizon* (2023–24)—a grayscale montage of seascapes and ocean waves intertwining with images of silkworms, their delicate threads juxtaposed with close-ups of metal chains.

This March, maf was one of seven artists and groups to participate in "Generative Matrix: The Recoding of Sound" at the Pingshan Art Museum in Shenzhen. His live set, featuring algorithmic music created with the visual programming software MaxMSP, explored two generative pathways. An eye-tracking camera monitoring the movements of maf's pupils triggered sonic feedback, while real-time weather data from Shenzhen served as input parameters.

Currently, maf's new site-specific sound installation *Restitution of the Tide* (2025) is part of Japan's sixth Setouchi Triennale. Housed in a now defunct communal bathhouse (*sentō*) in Tamano City, the work draws poetic connections between the old *sentō*'s interior atmosphere, the history of reclamation on the coastline of Okayama prefecture, and the environment of the artist's hometown in China. The project's Chinese title—*Huinantian* 返潮—refers to a climactic phenomenon of the Guangdong region, characterized by the extreme springtime humidity that causes condensation on interior walls and floors. But the Japanese title, *Shiogaeri* 潮返 (literally "the tide coming back"), correlates more closely with the English, revealing the deeper undercurrent of the work—the act of regaining what has been lost. Specifically, it is a reference to the salvaging of Okayama's land during the late 19th century. Seeking to recreate the hyper-humid state of *Huinantian*, maf crafted a foggy atmosphere, paired with never-repeating, computer-generated sound to create a sensorial audiovisual landscape. The installation invites a meditation on the interdependence of humans, matter, and the environment, urging a shift from extraction to restitution, from dominance to coexistence.

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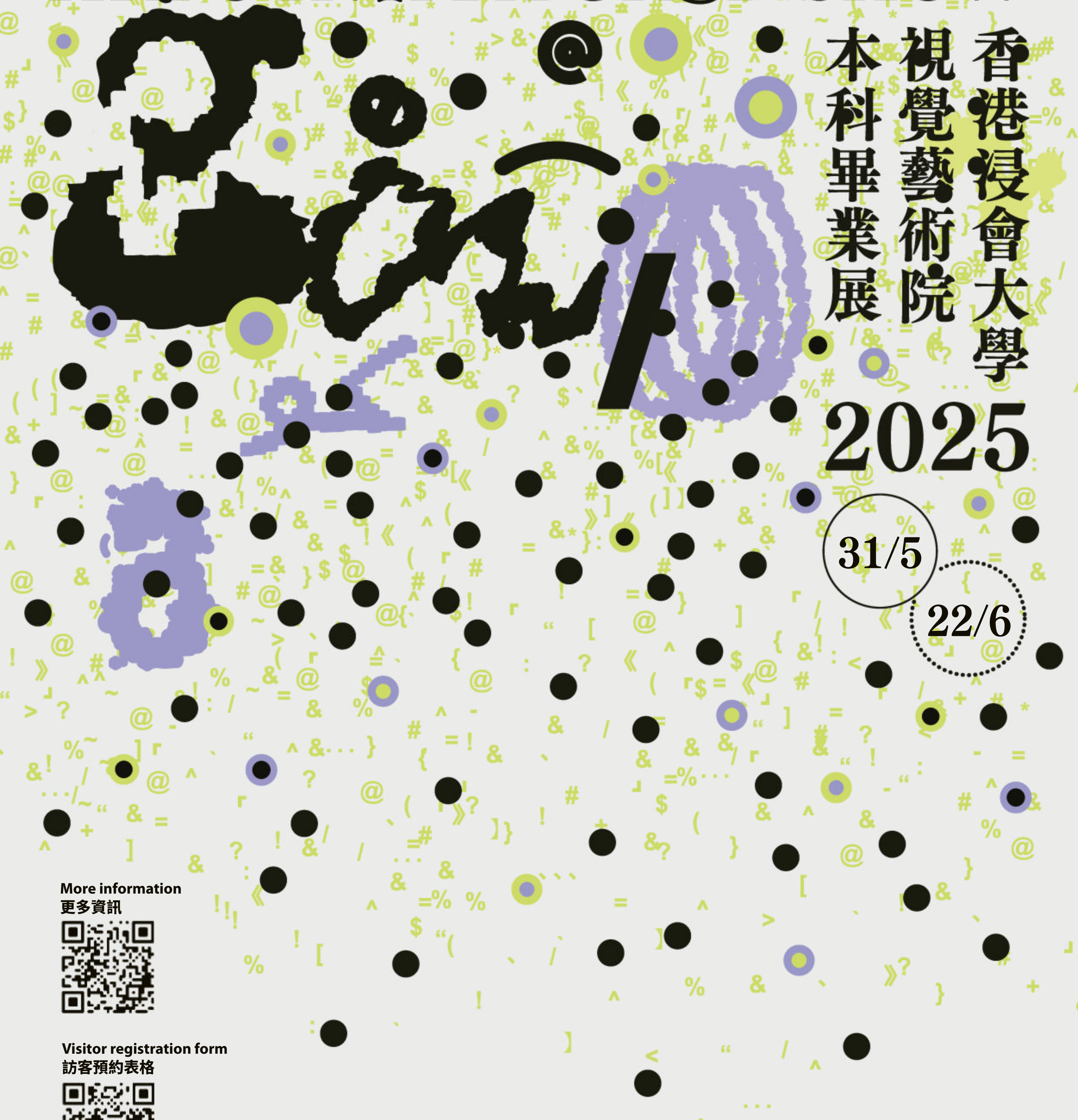

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PREPARING FOR A WORLD OF TARIFFS

BY RYAN SU

US President Donald Trump's April 2 executive order imposing tariffs of a minimum of 10 percent on all US imports, commencing three days later, sent shockwaves around the world. Commentators stated that such measures, directly targeting free trade, would upend global trade and hinder economic growth. While the tariff rates have been consequently relaxed for some countries, and exemptions provided, it bears considering the impact of tariffs on art practices and the international sales and movement of artworks.

The Trump tariffs were generally calculated based on the US's trade deficit with each country. That amount was divided by the total annual value of imports from that country, and the result was then divided by two. With the European Union, for example, the US has a USD 235.6 billion deficit and annual imports of USD 605.8 billion. The deficit is equal to 39 percent of the exchange, which, when divided by two, rounds to a 20-percent tariff on European goods. While hailed as being reciprocal, this formula fails to consider any existing protectionist regulations abroad, including tariffs charged by countries for US imports.

Art is not usually subject to tariff barriers. Until recently, China had no import tariff on art aside from the usual 13-percent value-added sales tax, and a truly reciprocal tariff would have been zero. However, in response to a 7.5-percent levy by the first Trump administration, China in 2019 instituted tariffs on US art of 20 percent for paintings, sculptures, and photographs, and somewhat less for collages and prints.

While artwork imports from China to the US seem to belong to a category exempt from the new Trump tariffs, any reversal would subject imports of Chinese artworks to a 145-percent tariff at present. While the stateside exemption provides some consolation, the constant volatility of the situation is cause for concern.

View of Art Basel Hong Kong, 2025. Courtesy Art Basel.

The Impact of Tariffs

If tariffs are imposed by the US on imports of Chinese art, the US market for Chinese art will be severely impacted. Stateside collectors would be hard-pressed to pay around one-and-a-half times more for a Chinese artwork. US art sales already tumbled 9 percent in the past year—even before the Trump tariffs had been announced—consistent with a 12-percent decline in global art sales. Any retaliatory tariff by the Chinese government is unlikely to help matters, as art sales in China plunged 31 percent in 2024, to their lowest level since 2009 (following the global financial crisis of 2008). With Chinese auction proceeds nosediving 63 percent, it is unlikely that the demand for art in China would increase with the implementation of retaliatory tariffs. Even without an art-specific duty, Trump's tariffs are expected to exacerbated the Chinese economy's already faltering expansion and slow growth.

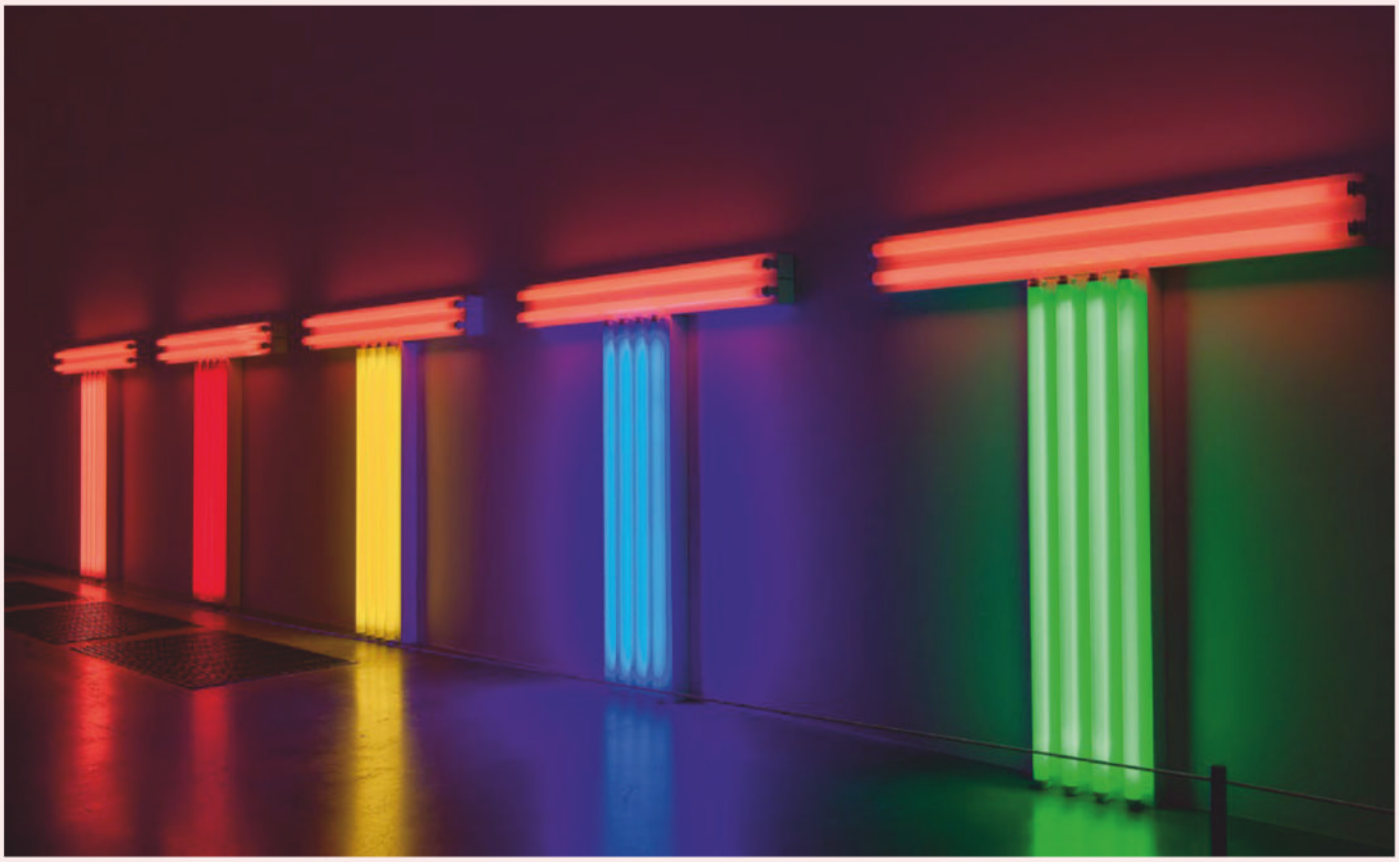
Unlike their effect on agricultural produce and manufactured articles like cars, tariffs would not increase the domestic production and consumption of art, and would not generate jobs for local artists. Tariffs are not designed for the art market. A work of Chinese contemporary art has to be created by a Chinese artist. An American artist cannot create a work of Chinese contemporary art in the US that is cheaper for US consumers than an imported work from China. The art market recognizes that not only individual artists but also particular schools of art and artistic movements are intrinsically linked to specific geographic locations—for example, China's Stars Group or Japan's Gutai Art Association. It is simply not possible to create a work of Chinese contemporary art domestically in the US. Or is it?

Creative Solutions

Artists have had the answer all along. Diasporic artists living in the US are already producing Chinese contemporary art in America, and American artists in China are doing likewise in reverse. The movement of artists across international borders means that artworks can be produced in countries with prohibitive import tariffs in place, essentially circumventing them.

Artist residencies, traditionally scenes of casual diplomacy and cultural exchange, could take on more urgent and critical roles in a world closing up to free trade. The fates of poorly funded residencies may change, if collectors come to see them as viable places to acquire art that would otherwise be very much more expensive—with the added cost going to tariffs, not to artists. This workaround also exposes a weakness of the Trump tariffs: their focus on the movement of physical goods, but not the movement of services.

The unique nature of artworks also affords tremendous latitude. A painting, when stripped down to its component parts, is essentially a piece of cloth with colors applied onto its surface—albeit stretched out by several wooden sticks. A painted canvas is



Installation view of **DAN FLAVIN**'s *Untitled (to Don Judd, colorist), 1–5*, 1987, pink, red, yellow, blue and green fluorescent light, 122 × 122 × 15 cm each. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

physically similar to a graphic T-shirt or a printed tablecloth. Other forces, rather than the inexpensive raw materials, bestow value upon the painting. One could characterize a painting as dyed fabric, in order to pay a minimal amount in tariffs. Governments themselves have sometimes assessed artworks on the value of their component parts. US Customs once labeled Constantin Brâncuși's sculpture *Bird in Space* (1923) as a "manufacture of metal," while in the UK, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs considered Bill Viola's video installations and a light piece by Dan Flavin to be electrical devices. In both cases, the courts ruled in the artists' (and dealers') favor, declaring the items to be artworks exempt from levies on industrial products.

Artists and galleries thinking creatively may choose to assemble or finish artworks in tariff-free or low-tariff locations, which may then be regarded as the artwork's country of origin. Artists may also work with subcontractors and licensees in tariff-free or low-tariff countries to produce artworks and sell them to overseas buyers, bypassing the US or China altogether. Unconventional mediums may also gain prominence. Physical artworks in the form of paintings and sculpture could give way to film, performance, and conceptual and digital artworks that do not manifest as objects and so can be transmitted digitally—completely circumventing restrictions on the free movement of physical goods.

The Evolution of the Mega Freeport

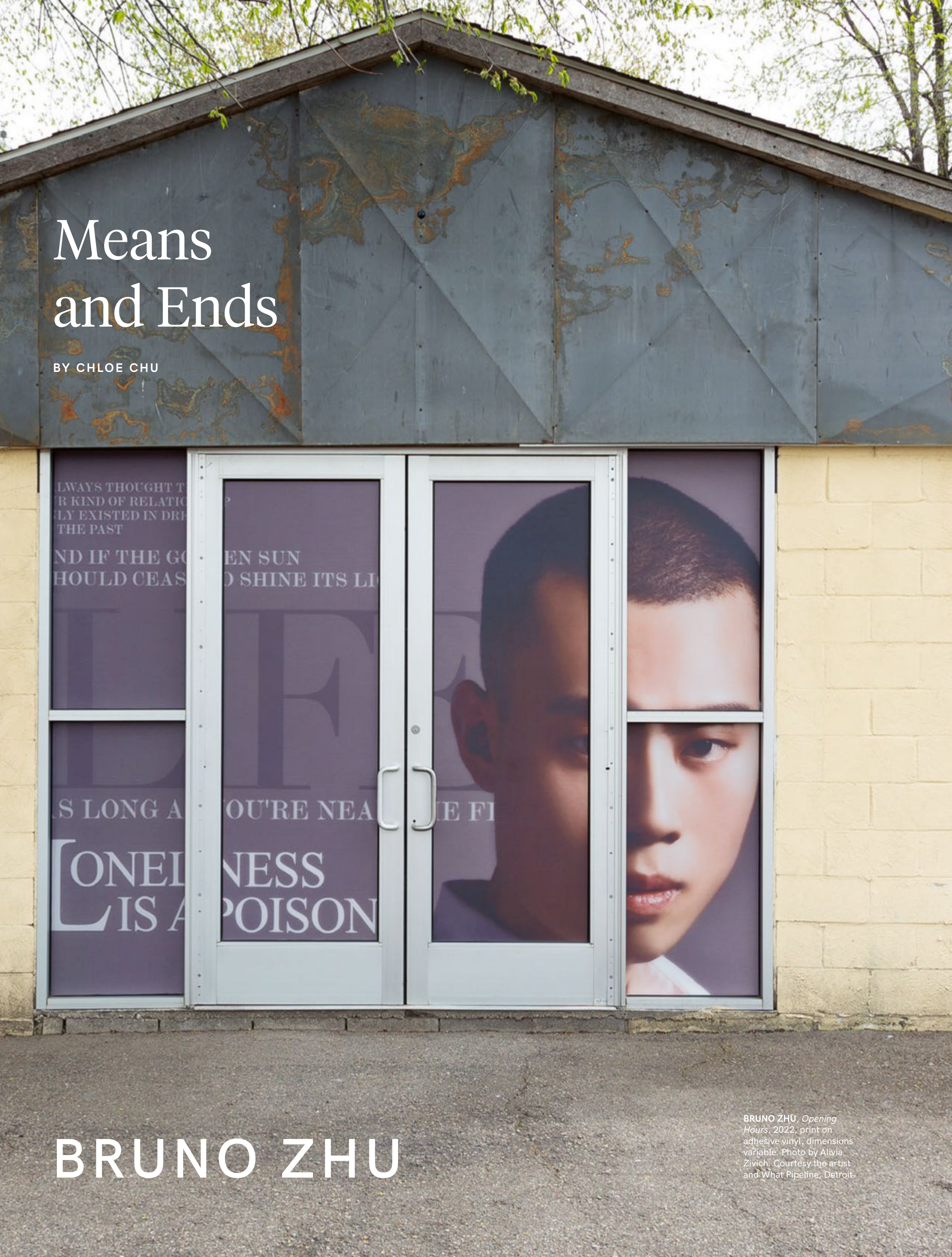
Freeports, which have fallen into disrepute as hotbeds for money laundering and the financing of terrorism, may also take on newfound relevance and legitimacy. Freeports could serve a critical function of the art market—exchange of ownership—and their increased importance would spell the evolution of the mega freeport. These larger-than-life facilities would operate on a far greater scale than galleries or auction houses, with increased capacities for artworks, antiquities, and other valuables requiring safe harbor from sweeping tariffs and punitive transaction costs.

Prohibitive tariff regimes like Trump's could even force international art fairs and commercial galleries to decamp to these free-trade zones, where deals can be made and artworks can change hands tax- and tariff-free. Traditional criticisms of freeports facilitating tax evasion for wealthy collectors might fall away, as governments already stand to profit from prevailing tariffs outside these safe zones. Residencies and artist studios may even proliferate in mega freeports, shortening the art market's supply chain and perhaps even becoming self-contained "art cities."

While the art market may escape tariffs—either by the above strategies or by simply remaining exempt—the regular commercial ecosystem, which has few tariff exemptions and which operates outside of mega freeports, cannot. Heightened customs scrutiny, increased costs, economic instability, and a global trade war will inevitably dampen the market for art. Dealers and auctioneers already confront a disturbing level of buyer caution. Still, the art world has weathered many storms—and this is just one more.

Means and Ends

BY CHLOE CHU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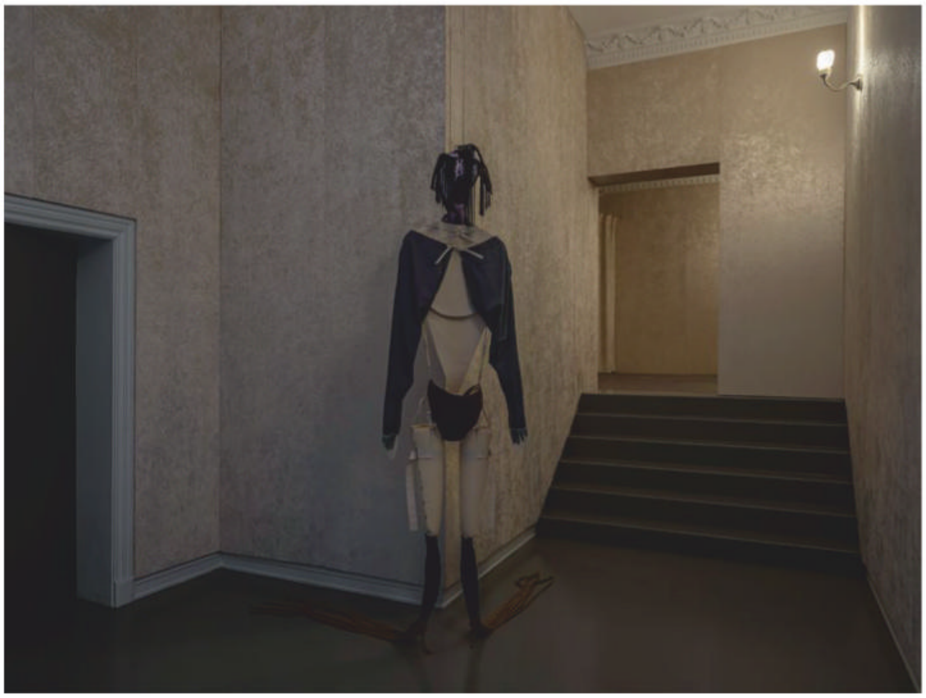
BRUNO ZHU

BRUNO ZHU, *Opening Hours*, 2022, print on adhesive vinyl, dimensions variable. Photo by Alivia Zivich. Courtesy the artist and What Pipeline, Detroit.



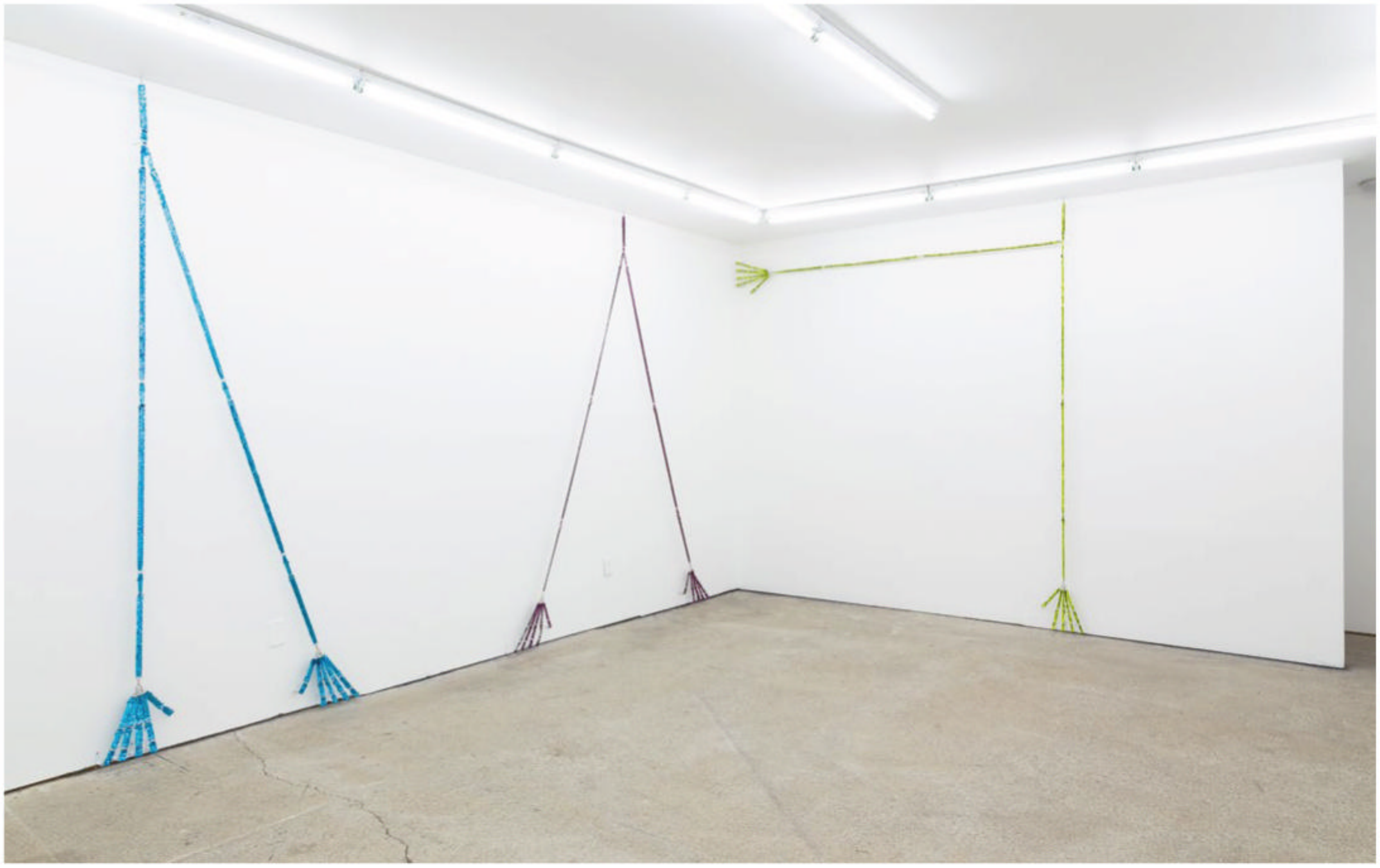
Installation view of **BRUNO ZHU**'s *He's too good to be true*, 2010–20, clothing, fabric, hardware, dimensions variable, at Unge Kunstneres Samfund (UKS), Oslo, 2020. Photo by Vegard Kleven. Courtesy the artist and UKS.

Detail of **BRUNO ZHU**'s *He's too good to be true*, 2010–20, clothing, fabric, hardware, dimensions variable. Photo by Vegard Kleven. Courtesy the artist and UKS, Oslo.

In our February 2025 conversation, Bruno Zhu often employed the word "editorial" to describe his creative approach. His use of the term is tied to its circulation in the fashion industry in the early 2000s. As a womenswear major at London's Central Saint Martins from 2010 to 2014, he learned to excise, transform, and combine elements from across the visual world to create a story and mood for each collection. It's an endlessly generative approach, Zhu insists: "If something doesn't work, you just cut it up or turn it upside down or inside out, and you move on." This has allowed him to take a wide range of directions in his work, from formal experiments—men's trousers refashioned into gloves, condoms stapled in a crucifix shape—to a "license" specifying the decorative treatment of four spatial environments, a project first manifested in London's Chisenhale Gallery in 2024. In January of this year, he installed two interlocking sets of revolving walls at the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA), intervening in the venue's postmodern architecture as part of his solo exhibition.

In honing his "editorial" approach, Zhu learned to read incisively, whether the subject is an image, an object, a space, or his own work. And as any good reader knows, context is key. A prolific publisher of his own zines, which he started making to impress a high school crush, Zhu became keenly aware of how the economies of production and circulation directly impact ideas. He saw that, though boundless, the method he was taught at Central Saint Martins never required contemplation of "why?" or critical interrogation of how an aesthetic came to be. Seeking to encompass these elements led to his mise-en-scène approach. By including objects only sparsely, he draws focus to the contextual factors that shape the display. He views it as a civic responsibility to never impose an interpretation, given his own experiences growing up as a "Chinese-looking person in Portugal," where strangers and acquaintances alike sought to dictate his story using their terms. Instead, he invites viewers to apprehend the work along with him, with multiple opportunities to ask "why?" and the occasional sly misdirection.

For example, in his 2020 solo exhibition "Shhhhhhh" at Unge Kunstneres Samfund in Oslo, Zhu leaned into the techniques that luxury brands use to seduce consumers into a fantasy. He took cues from the style of Miu Miu stores, draping the gallery walls in a lush, champagne velvet. A canvas slip obscured a table, like the covers that transform Maison Margiela's store furniture. An Easter egg dangled from the ornate stucco ceiling. The show's most conspicuous object was



Installation view of **BRUNO ZHU**'s "Everybody is Crazy," at What Pipeline, Detroit, 2023. Photo by Alivia Zivich. Courtesy the artist and What Pipeline.

He's too good to be true (2010–20), one of Zhu's sewn-together male figures, propped upright like a scarecrow with toes as long as its legs. Exhibition guides circulated, giving visitors fictional accounts that, as Zhu had instructed, melded his loosely autobiographical stories with elements from their own lives. There was deceit in the documentation, too. The captions and publicity materials backdated *He's too good to be true* to 2010, even though Zhu did not begin making such figures until 2017. On the artist's website, other works appear to have been similarly mischaracterized—some dated to 50 years before his birth. These were oblique invitations for viewers to puncture the presented fabrications.

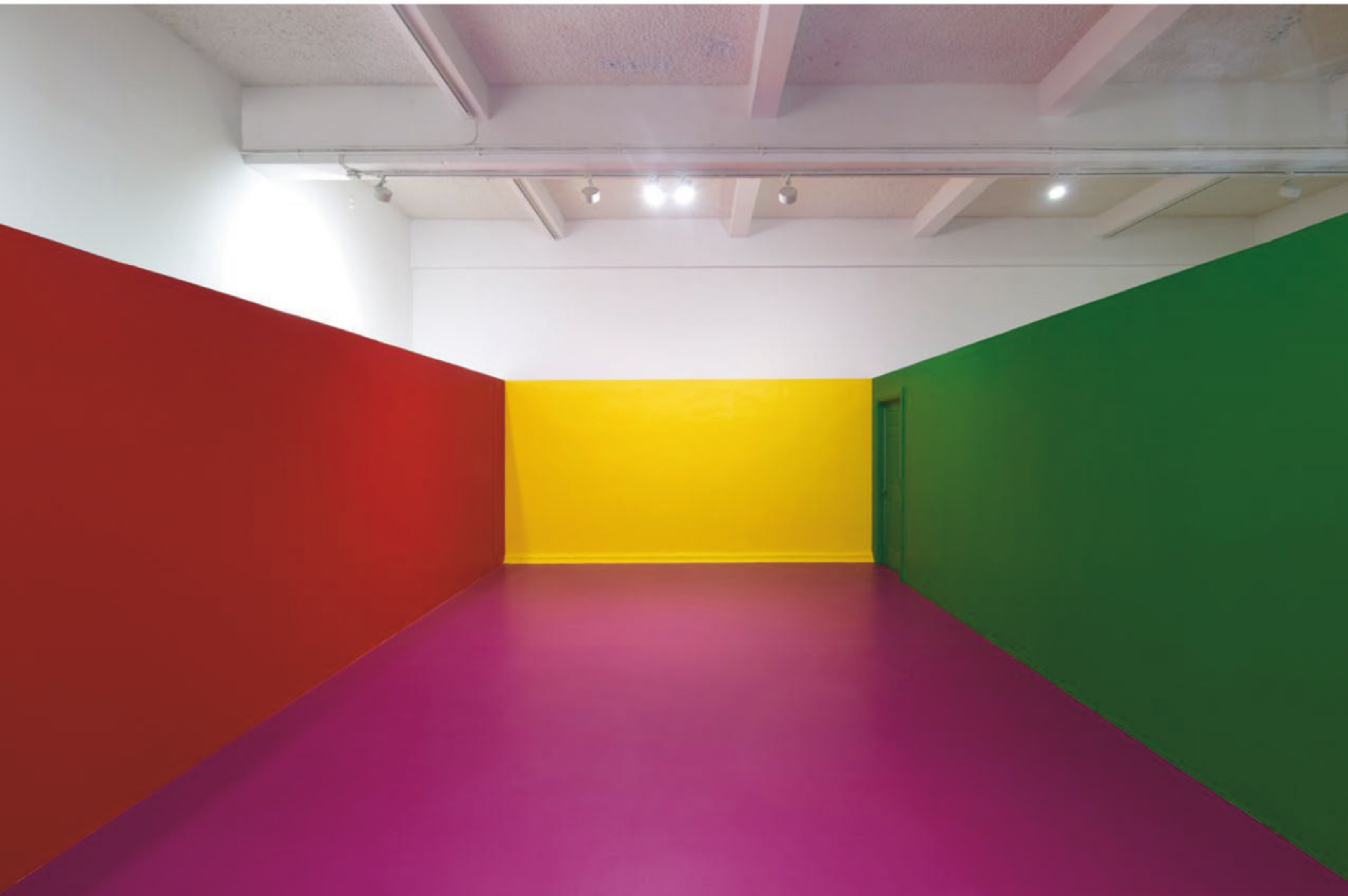
When the pandemic hit, the gesture of backdating quickly became "cute," Zhu said. He decided to visualize the trope of time warping in another way: by making a soft sculpture of a Patek Philippe watch—modeled on one of his mother's—scaled up so that the clockface's diameter matches the width of his shoulders. The hands tick backwards. In his 2023 solo exhibition "Everybody is Crazy," held at the artist-run space What Pipeline in Detroit, Zhu isolated and recreated the minute and hour hands, making them the same length, thus overriding their function entirely. Cut from sparkly lengths of sequin trim on elastic backing, the hands stretched across entire walls in various positions corresponding to five-minute intervals. Each hand gripped the edge of the drywall with four fingers.

"Everybody is Crazy" was a turning point in Zhu's practice. "My thinking was becoming spatial and territorial," he said. "When an artist is invited to do a show, you occupy space, right? What if we challenge ourselves to think about the consequences of this occupation?" The consequences he had in mind weren't just art historical but immediate, encompassing the expansion of possible visitor experiences and the collaboration models available to artists and their hosts. Receiving exhibition invitation from Chisenhale and M HKA, he sought to deepen this line of inquiry. M HKA gave him modest resources to dress a challenging space with a triangular floorplan and two structural pillars. Merging the problem with its solution, Zhu turned the eyesore pillars into the pivot points for two revolving walls. He saw himself as "an artist entering a partnership with a host body and producing a response to it by providing a service rather than art," the service being the resolution of the gallery's spatial design. In attempting to make the collaboration a generative one for both artist and commissioner, he prototyped an alternative to the art world's usual exploitative, lopsided structures, where there can be a chasm between input and payoff, whether for the artist or the institutions. Equally, in directly rooting the project in the real-world conditions of available resources, he rejected the conceptualist legacy of contrived, artist-imposed limitations and instructions.

At Chisenhale, Zhu similarly sought ways to collaborate that would be mutually sustaining for the platform and the artist, while addressing the financial precarity that both face. Chisenhale presented him with a commission agreement that included a frustrating recoupment clause without specific figures or deadlines. He found himself caught in contract negotiations while trying to develop his creative proposals. As he put it: "I didn't want to have two conversations. I wanted to have only one conversation, which is about making art." This led him to turn the licensing agreement itself into an artwork, thus collapsing means and ends. Like reproduction rights in the entertainment industry, the license for the show can be bought by other organizations, for a fee shared between Zhu and Chisenhale.

"License to Live" (2024) raised the question of who possesses the means of production. It highlighted inequities between patrons and artists, asset owners and workers, and invited readings of these dynamics against the background of racially coded, extractive labor practices that proliferated around the colonial division between plantation owner and enslaved laborer. The four interconnected spatial environments built per the license's specifications formally hinted at these concerns. A four-sided cabinet with mirrors behind the shelves alluded to how, even today, aristocratic estates sequester treasured objects from surrounding contexts—including anything that might elucidate the sources of the wealth and power that facilitated the accumulation of the collection—and endlessly reproduce them as isolated simulacra. The sides of the walls were each painted based on the cardinal direction that they face, in either vermilion, Scheele's green, Naples yellow, cobalt blue, or Perkins mauve—19th-century colors with histories of toxic industrial production. Elsewhere, damask-print wallpaper and decorative plaster molding pointed to the class aspirations that inform taste and design, while celebrating the co-opting of rarefied forms in mass markets. Reflecting on the commission, Zhu said: "As an artist, I feel the urge to offer models for how to reorganize space, bodies, and time. As a citizen, I would like to see these models executed on a massive social scale. All I can do is put forward a proposal in an exhibition, but I hope that it sets the conceptual foundations."

Fittingly, in an interview with curator Olivia Aherne, published by Chisenhale, Zhu encouraged readers to leave the exhibition: "Get out, and go. Go live your life." In enfolding mundane terms and conditions in his work, Zhu challenges how artists and critics so often edit out these factors from narratives of art production. He re-anchors creative practice in life and affirms the stakes that art has in the real world and vice versa. Thus, whether directed at the color of a wall, the design principles of fashion, or at the content and configuration of an exhibition, the question "why?" contains radical potential: nothing is static, everything can be understood and reworked anew.



Installation view of **BRUNO ZHU**'s "License to Live," 2024, at Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2024. Photo by Andy Keate. Courtesy Chisenhale Gallery.

KEI IMAZU

Portrait of Kei Imazu.
Courtesy the artist.

Re-figuring Histories

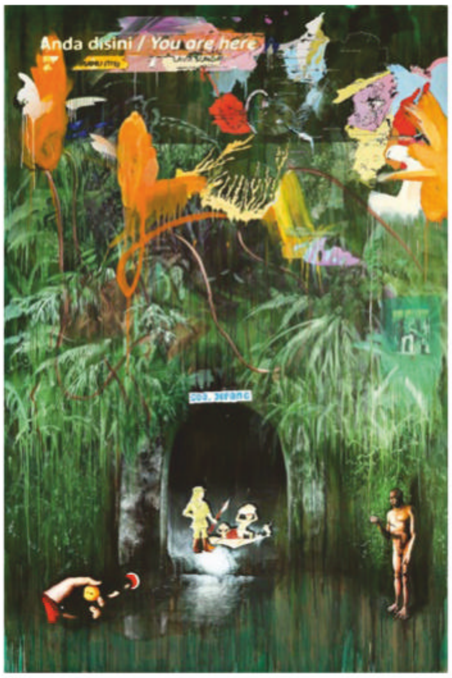
BY HUNG DUONG

Tension vibrates through Kei Imazu's oeuvre, where images that normally would never meet are interwoven to create unprecedented mise-en-scènes. In her surrealistic paintings, 3D-printed sculptures, and installations, all marrying organic entities with cybernetics, the ghosts of art history and imperial violence meet contemporary catastrophes—an encounter mediated through Imazu's personal experience as a Japanese artist living in Bandung, Indonesia. Her vivacious tableaux convey a desire to confront her mother country's dark past, as well as to comment on the socio-ecological issues of the archipelagic nation in which she currently resides.

Imazu began developing this approach early in the 2000s, when she enrolled in Tama Art University in Tokyo. Around that time, the first-generation MacBook, nicknamed "Onigiri" (after a handheld rice snack), was released, along with Photoshop CS1 and CS2. Imazu still recalls the joy she found in creating images using the new devices and software, particularly the Photoshop function "finger paint," which allowed her to smudge and blend pixels using a touch panel—a process akin to mixing paint on canvas. Influenced by Gerhard Richter's blurred photo-paintings and Francis Bacon's images that deconstruct figures and objects, Imazu began to explore the intricate relationship between classical and digital painting. In her show "Measuring invisible distance" (2018) at YAMAMOTO GENDAI in Tokyo, Imazu echoed the traditional Japanese painting technique of arranging motifs in parallel on flat backgrounds. Within this spatial structure, she inserted tropes from historical Western art—distorted with Photoshop and then painted to render chaos-in-order, diluting the hierarchical chokehold that Western culture had on the discourse taught during her art school years in Japan.

The exhibition at YAMAMOTO GENDAI revealed Imazu's concern with the fraught relationship between literal representation and digital fluidity. For Imazu, images serve as records of actual things, while computer manipulation allows her to explore various visual modes. As the range of her visual sources expanded from artbooks and exhibitions in pre-SNS (Social Network Services) Japan to Internet-sourced images, Imazu also began learning more about the complicated historical relationship between Japan and Indonesia, prompting her to re-examine her own artistic positioning.

Imazu's 2019 exhibition "Anda disini" (Indonesian for "you are here") at Museum Haus Kasuya in Kanagawa, Japan, was inspired by an experience from her first visit to Bandung for a residency in 2017. Upon learning about the term *roumusya*, which refers to Indonesian laborers conscripted to build facilities during Japan's occupation of the islands, Imazu visited Goa Jepang, a military cave dug by the *roumusya*. Haunted by its eerie ambience, she resurrected the atmosphere by covering the gallery walls with enlarged photographs of the cave's entrance and inner linings. The exhibition showcased paintings depicting Java Man (*Pithecanthropus erectus*, once posited as transitional between apes and humans) subjected to visual distortion, a subtle nod to the violence inflicted by Japanese soldiers on the *roumusya*. The act of orchestrating disparate images and sources into imaginative constellations enabled Imazu to convey a complex mix of discomfort and empathy regarding the hidden histories of Goa Jepang.


Anda disini / You are here
Goa Jepang

KEI IMAZU, *Anda Disini (You are here)*, 2024, oil on canvas, 300 × 200 cm. Courtesy the artist; ROH Projects, Jakarta; and Museum Haus Kasuya, Yokosuka.

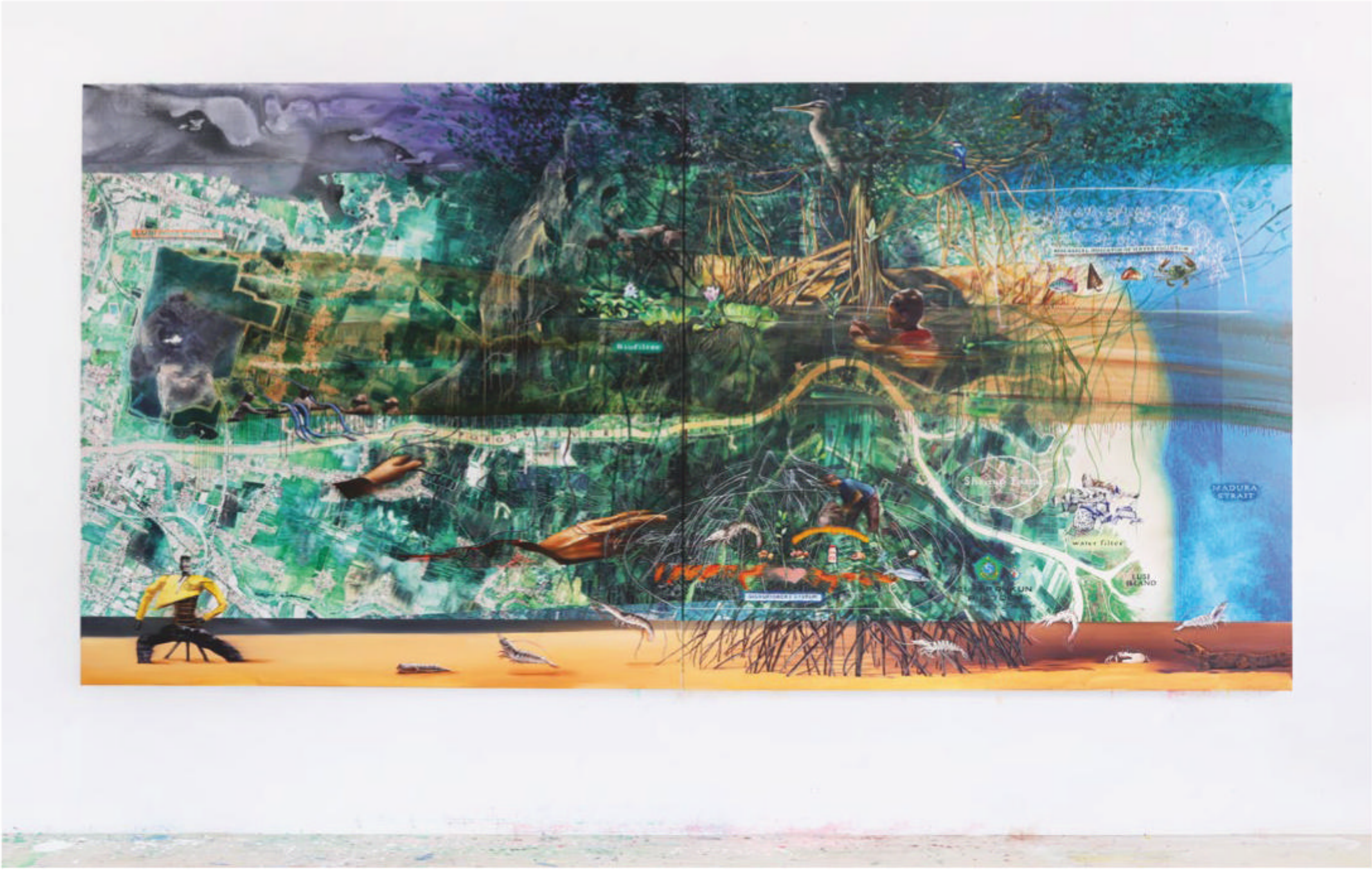
After Imazu relocated to Bandung and started a family with Indonesian artist Bagus Pandega, her visual repertoire began to incorporate more images and narratives from her new locale. She also embarked on collaborative creative projects with Pandega. At Frieze Seoul 2022, their display *When Facing the Mud (Response of Shrimp Farmers in Sidoarjo)* for the booth of ROH Projects, Jakarta, focused on a 2006 ecological disaster in Sidoarjo in East Java, attributed to both natural and man-made factors. Due to a gas company's misconduct while drilling, a volcano erupted, engulfing surrounding villages in toxic mud. According to Imazu, the mud continues to gush out even after 19 years, decimating not only the natural ecosystem but also the life and livelihood of local villagers. She and Pandega ventured to Sidoarjo to investigate firsthand, engaging with various local communities.

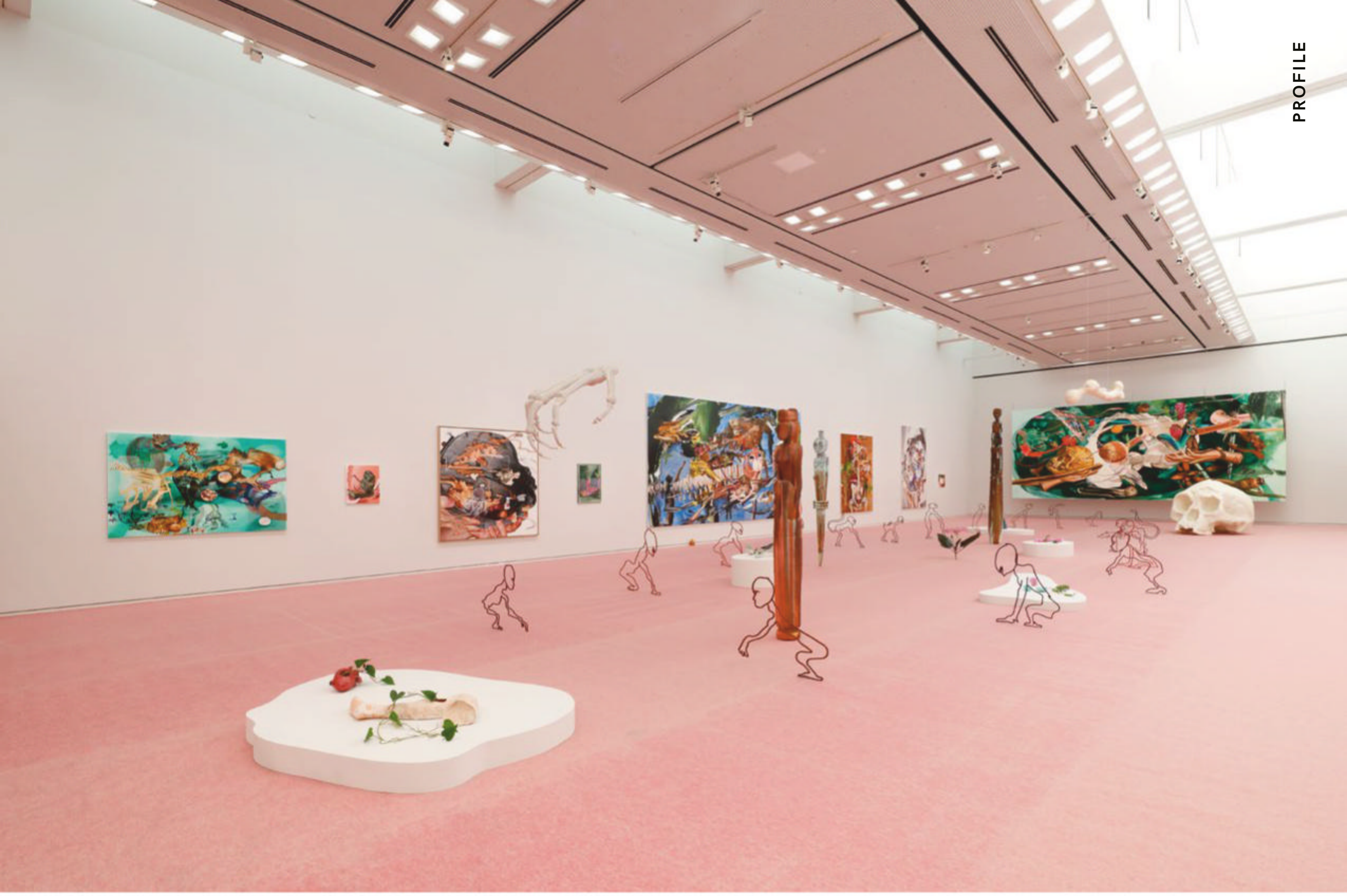
Pandega then created a 3D printer that produced Sidoarjo mud models of lost homes based on residents' memory. In the Frieze installation, the DIY mud printer—fashioned after a drilling machine—simultaneously represented the destructive tool that annihilated the Sidoarjo area houses and the technology that resurrects them as 3D models. Meanwhile, Imazu created paintings and videos of the Porong River basin, a shrimp farming area where polluted water from Sidoarjo flows. Her large-scale painting juxtaposes images of plant and animal life along the river basin with a map of the Sidoarjo mud volcano site. The tensions between figuration and erasure, humanity and nature, became palpable, as Pandega's machine and Imazu's painting quietly recreated and archived memories long buried under mud.

Shortly after Imazu moved to Indonesia, she became a mother and encountered the country's cumbersome administrative system for registering her child as a citizen. Consequently, she became increasingly drawn to divine female figures in the mythologies of both Indonesia and Japan, as she sought to make sense of her new motherhood. *Hainuwele* (2023), a recent installation showcased as part of her mini-retrospective "Tanah Air" (2025) at the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, was inspired by the story of Hainuwele, recounted in Seram, one of the Maluku Islands of Indonesia. When the sacred figure Hainuwele was murdered by islanders after she drifted ashore, her body sprouted into coconut trees—a food source that feeds islanders to this day. Imazu linked the myth of Hainuwele to a similar story about the Japanese goddess Ogetsuhime, whose body transformed into different types of grains after death. These stories led Imazu to ponder ideas of nurture, motherhood, and her own relationship with her child. Her installation included not only paintings with layered symbols of coconuts and female bodies but also 3D-printed sculptures that evoke sacred totems and flora and fauna from Seram Island, summoning the potent generative power of female deities.

At the core of the retrospective "Tanah Air" was the tension surrounding the unbalanced distribution of resources between the Global South and North.

KEI IMAZU, *When Facing the Mud (Response of Shrimp Farmers in Sidoarjo)*, 2022, oil, acrylic, mud, UV print on canvas, 388 × 194 cm. Courtesy the artist and ROH Projects, Jakarta.





Installation view of **KEI IMAZU**'s "Tanah Air," at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, 2025. Photo by Keizo Kioku. Courtesy the artist and Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery.

During a conversation in her Bandung studio, where Imazu was busy preparing for her forthcoming solo show at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara (Museum MACAN) in Jakarta in May, Imazu said: "I grew up being taught that Japan was a defeated nation that had been bombed in the war, and it was only later that I learned about Japan's invasion of various parts of Asia. Upon moving to Indonesia, I was again shocked by how the environment of the Global South is being sacrificed to support affluent lives in developed countries in the Global North. I felt that resources were being plundered from countries like Indonesia through systems such as patriarchy, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. Hence, in the exhibition, I depicted resources mythically as figures of mothers and women, and attempted to visualize and narrate the pillage that continues to the present day."

In recent years, much of Java's landscape has been disrupted, with countless lives uprooted and forced to adapt to new political alliances and modes of resource extraction. The Whoosh train that runs between Bandung and Jakarta, for example, is the region's latest high-speed rail transport, built with Chinese technology and investment. Imazu's art reminds us of the need to address forgotten histories and conflicts—lest they mutate into contemporary disasters—while remaining in touch with our embodied experiences as we navigate different realities. She intends to work with sound in the near future, to offer audiences an auditory channel into her creative universe—a mark of her continuous experimentation.

HIDDEN
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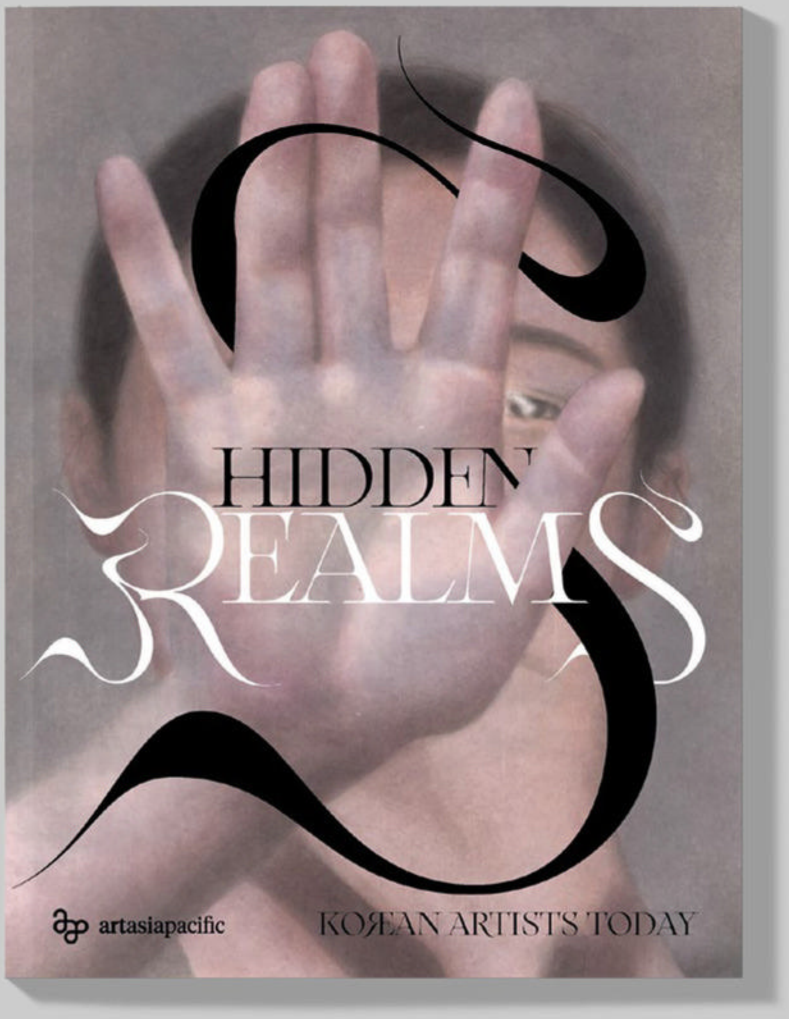

Hidden Realms: Korean Artists Today dives into the work of nine female artists from Korea whose practices look beyond daily life at the deep currents of the contemporary world. Through in-depth monographic essays, critics and curators based in Korea and internationally present key artworks and unique insights, providing the cultural context for readers to learn more about these vibrant artists. With illustrations of artworks and exhibitions, *Hidden Realms* is designed by the critically acclaimed London-based creative studio Barnbrook.

Texts by: Valentina Buzzi, Harry C.H. Choi, Hayoung Chung, David Elliott, Sooyoung Leam, Kelly Ma, Diana SeoHyung, Yvonne Wang

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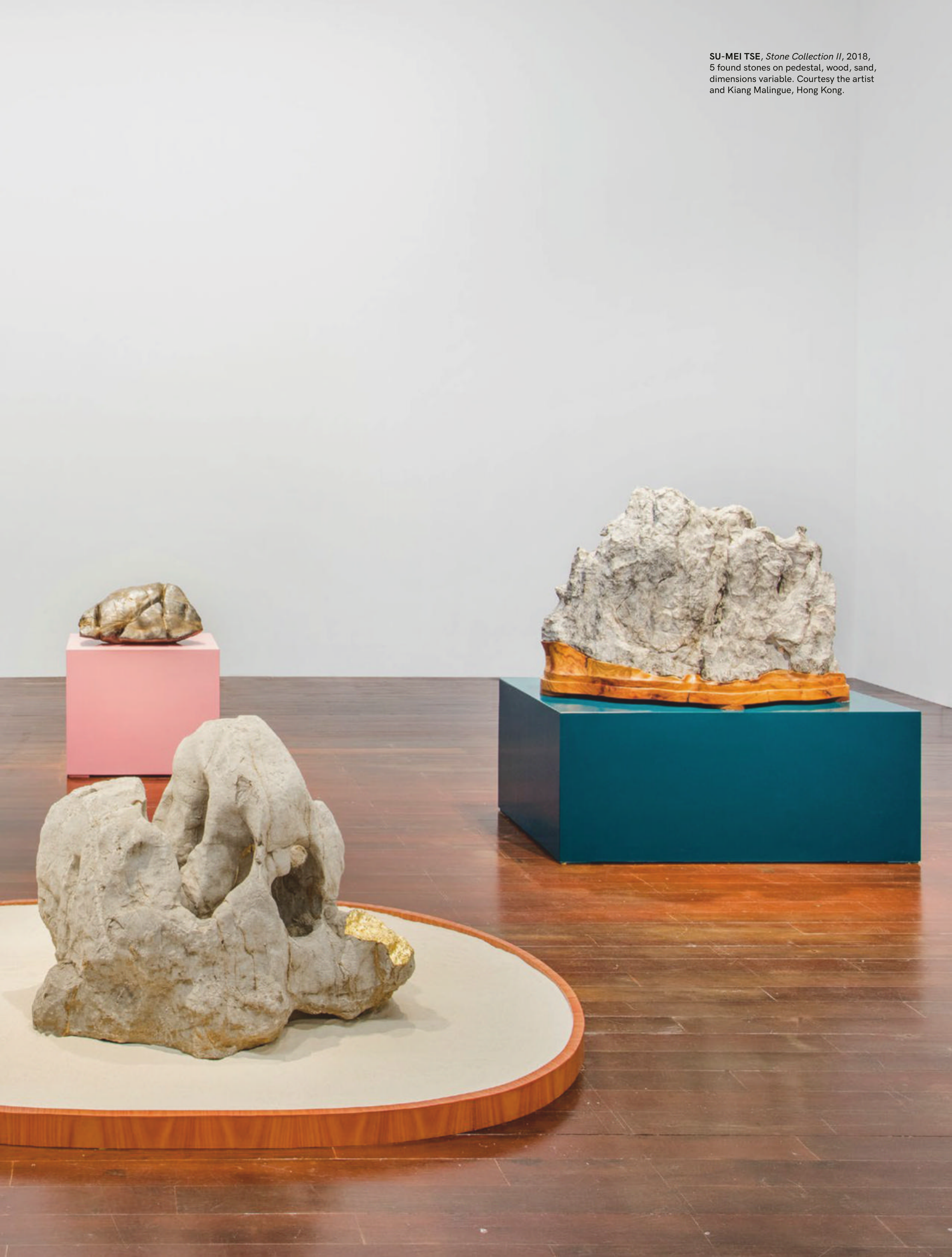


SU-MEI TSE, *Stone Collection II*, 2018, 5 found stones on pedestal, wood, sand, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.

Emptied

In a room at the top of Kiang Malingue's vertical gallery building in the Wan Chai neighborhood of Hong Kong, large double-height windows overlook the trees across the alleyway. Before the windows, in late 2024, for her exhibition "Daydreams," Su-Mei Tse had laid eight white porcelain sheets resembling folio pages onto translucent silk paper on the floor. High up on the wall to the right of this configuration was a 1.5-meter-square image of the moon. On the left wall, closer to ground level, was a framed photograph of a marble Roman bust, the woman's nose smashed off, her tight curls still intact.

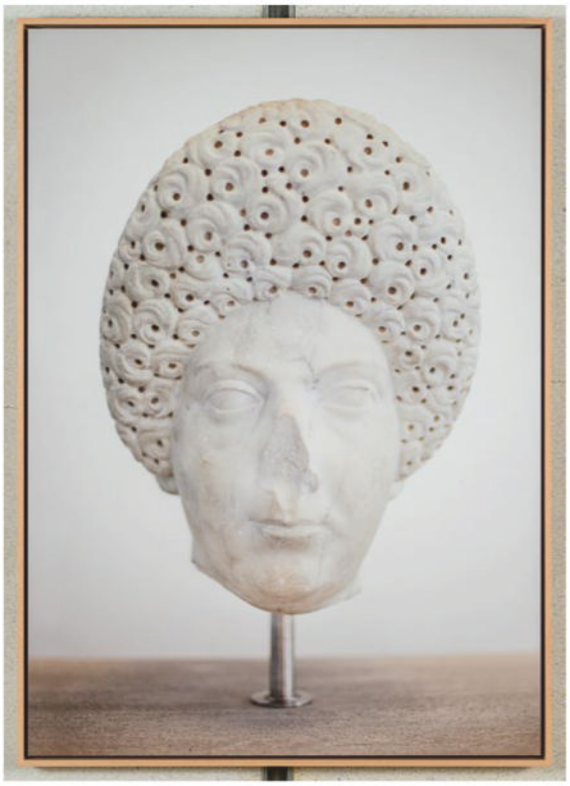
The contemplative poise of the objects, their collective evocation of a poet or musician sitting at a desk before a blank sheet of paper, with a view of trees, the moon overhead, the spirit of antiquity at hand—all suggested a Romantic scene of inspiration stirring before the pen is lifted. The space was silent, meditative. Tse explained that the first time she came into the space several months prior she felt "there was nothing to do here because it was already so meditative and perfect." The installation then arose as a composition that maintained that sensibility, conveying the sense of the "breath before something is written."

In physical terms, Tse's works are both less and more than their components. They can come to her first as a thought or fleeting impression, and later evolve through longer moments of contemplation. A classically trained cellist from a family of musicians (her father played the violin; her mother, the piano), she often employs musicality—whether a sense of sound, a measured silence, or a visual reference—as an intangible feature of her multisensory assemblages, which may include sculptures, found objects, photographic imagery, and videos of performative gestures. In effect, she composes her exhibitions. There is not a narrative but a visual sequence, and a desire to create what she calls "timeless moments."

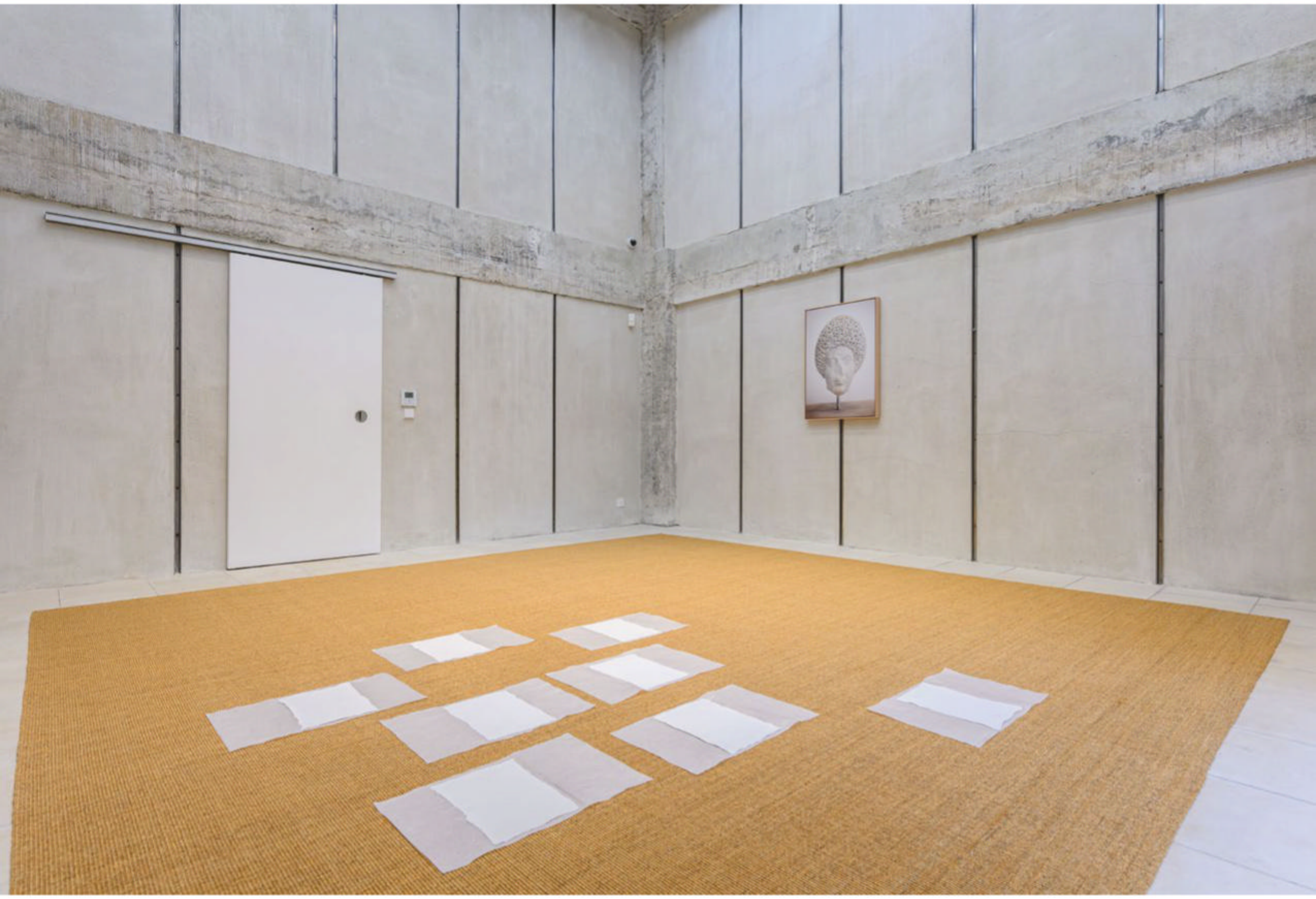
In "Daydreams," a potent emptiness revealed itself over time. The blank porcelain sheets on the floor, titled *Love Letters* (2024), are like fresh pages awaiting the first marks—or perhaps, as the artist suggested, the words have disappeared, lost to time. *Far Side of the Moon* (2022), for instance, is not a photo of the rugged lunar surface but a digital composite reflecting Tse's imagination of the distant and unseeable side (from Earth) of our orbiting companion. Tse said she was thinking about how our ideals of love and beauty are intertwined and then projected onto nature through arts such as poetry or painting. Likewise, the bust in the photograph *Roman Head* (2017/24) evokes thoughts on the passage of time, as the once-famous empress (Domitia Longina), whose face was chiseled in stone and painted to preserve her memory, is now unknown to most people and here stripped down to a raw, fragile materiality.

Together, the three works function like a composition, mirroring the musical sense of arranging notes in time and space, across different registers in a score, to bring out resonances and harmonies of ideas. They also reflect Tse's interest in what she called materials that display a "vulnerability and fragility" yet, in their mutedness, manifest "an openness to receive" our emotional projections or ideas. "Contemplation," Tse told curators Christophe Gallois and Katrin Weilenmann, "means taking the time to make what we see become active . . . and, in this way, it is a kind of journey back into ourselves."

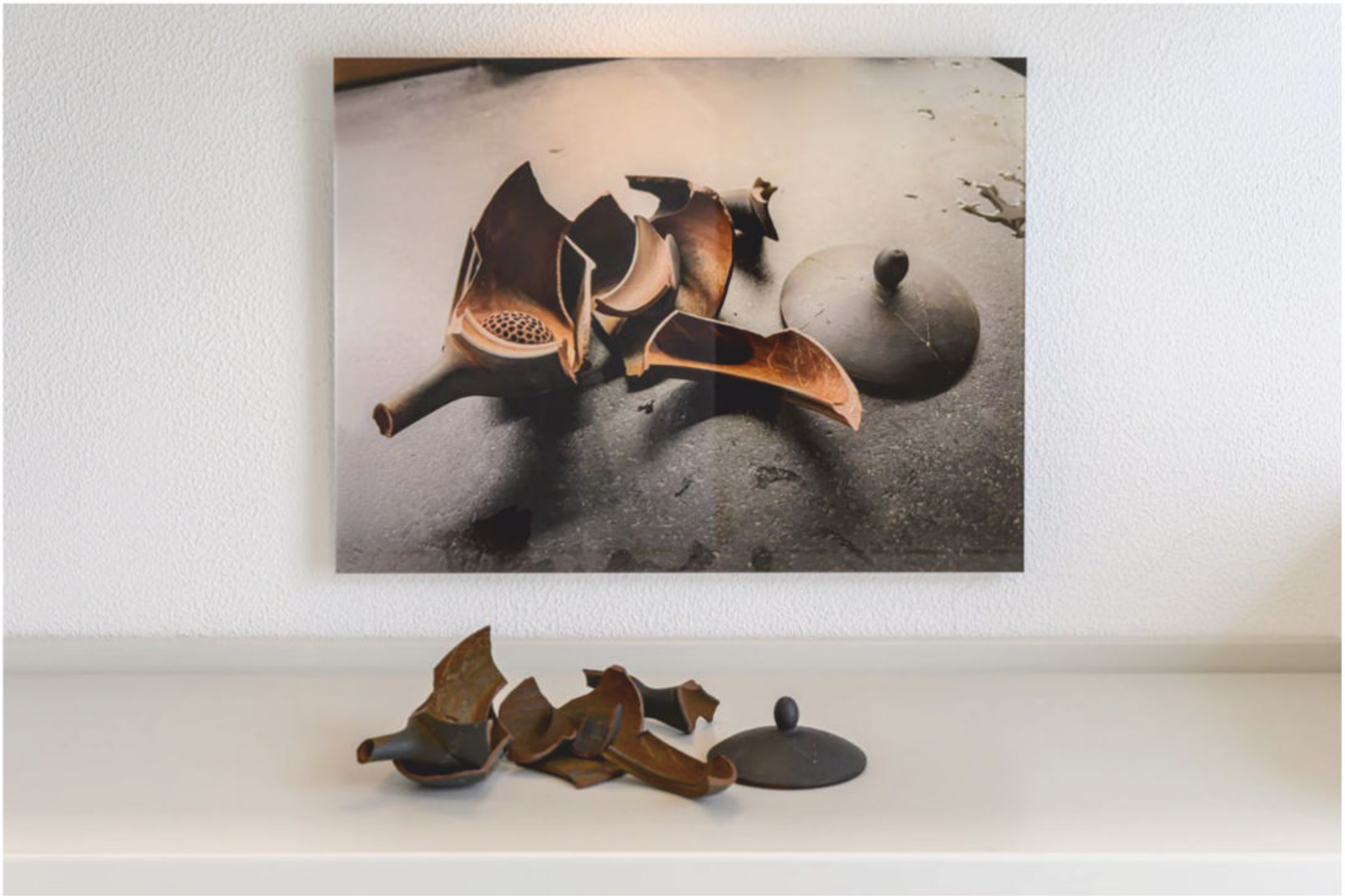
Tse's interest in interior states of being and the manifestation of thoughts into forms, of the "breath before" something comes into being, was visualized in the single-channel video *Shaping* (2019), which depicts a clay pot being turned on a wheel, forming and unforming in close-up, with a pair of hands guiding its creation. The pottery wheel spins like a record, accompanied by a white noise of low frequencies. The endlessly spinning wheel evokes the daydream as a mental space just before deliberate thought or articulation, as



SU-MEI TSE, *Roman Head*, 2017–24, fine art print on Hahnemühle mounted on Dibond, shadow gap wooden frame, 122.5 × 87.5 cm (framed). Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.



Installation view of **SU-MEI TSE**'s *Love Letters*, 2024, eight porcelain sheets, silk paper, dimensions variable. Photo by Samson Wong Pak Hang. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.



the clay perpetually hovers in a liminal state between becoming an object and devolving into formless material again.

Installation view of **SU-MEI TSE**'s *Broken (teapot)*, 2024, color photograph mounted on Dibond, acrylic, and ceramic shards, photograph: 30 × 40 cm, sculpture: 6.5 × 26 × 18 cm. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.

Installation view of **SU-MEI TSE**'s *Entanglements*, 2024, 19 plaster sculptures, table, fine art print Hahnemühle mounted on Dibond, wooden frame with museum glass, dimensions variable. Photo by Samson Wong Pak Hang. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.

Entangled

Tse's exhibition title, "Daydreams," was an invitation to explore this state of consciousness. What are daydreams but thoughts that depart from the reality of the immediate moment, tangents that take us out of the present and into the future or back into the past? In a 1907 lecture, Sigmund Freud held that daydreaming, which is fundamental to the creative act, is rooted in the artist's desire to alter the often unsatisfactory world of reality by conjoining the past and present into a more pleasant future. He suggested that seeing others' daydreams come to life in works of art has a cathartic effect, offering us "a liberation of tensions in our minds . . . enabling us thenceforward to enjoy our own daydreams without self-reproach or shame." For Tse, this precious mental space is counterintuitively a way "to handle everyday experience and to deal with suffering in the world by shifting our view."

On a small shelf in the gallery's staircase sat *Broken (teapot)* (2024), an arrangement of ceramic shards in front of a photograph of these same pieces on a tabletop. "It happened—like these simple things that happen," Tse remarked. She took a picture to show her friend. Afterward she decided she liked the image, and it became an artwork in her head. As we looked at it, she reminded me that now it is a still life, "a *nature morte.*" A moment of sadness or frustration, perhaps, transformed into an image, and a memento mori for this broken object. As Tse implied, the genre of still life—a composition of symbolically potent objects—has long been used by artists as a microcosm for the world.

Expanding on this idea of carefully arranged objects as a metaphorical space, Tse, in a large windowless white-cube space, had placed a white square table bearing an arrangement of 19 cast plaster objects, an installation titled *Entanglements* (2024). She made these plaster forms by crumpling pieces of paper, wrapping them in twine and then casting them. What thoughts, notes, or false starts might those pages have contained? Erased in the casting process, those ideas and emotions have become tantalizingly unknowable to us. On the wall was a photograph of a single plaster form against a pristine white background. Much like the classical bust upstairs that once had a nose and painted features, the white-on-white photograph allows us to wonder, imagine, or daydream—becoming a symbol of what could have been, once was, or could still come into being.

In explaining the work, Tse noted that there are moments, when, whether as an artist or writer, or simply as a common mortal, we feel trapped. Her idea was to visualize these "entanglements," to spend time with them by binding them carefully, and then letting these moments go. She associates the whiteness of the work with silence, the anxious moment just before a thought becomes legible, before ideas are transformed into physical reality. In his essay on Japanese aesthetics, *In Praise of Shadows* (1933), writer Junichiro Tanizaki contends that in Japanese music "most important of all are the pauses," a technique that modern media like the radio cannot well accommodate. In her work, Tse wrestles with silence and speaking. "What's going on in the world," she told me, "is not very inspiring nor helping to create with lightness." Instead, "we use the noise to *not* focus on what we don't want to. We don't *want* to be in silence." For her, then, the silence of *Entanglements* is not only an escape from clamor but a way of "taking time and also taking care."

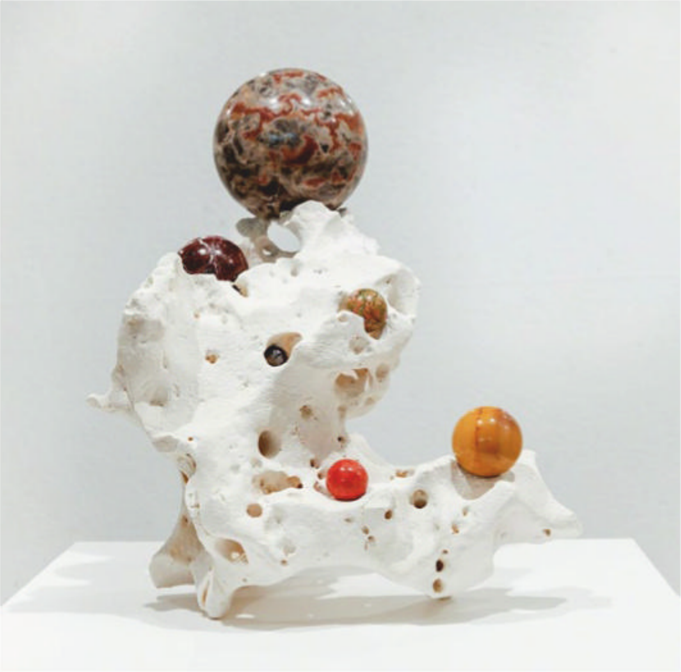
Nestled

When we sat in the office downstairs to have coffee, Tse lit a candle in front of Sonic Youth's album *Daydream Nation* (1988), which was sitting on a ledge. "It's been a deeply depressing time," she remarked. "Poetry is a breath of fresh air—we are so negative about ourselves. Being connected is necessary." The cover of this iconic alternative rock album features one of German postwar painter Gerhard Richter's slightly blurred photorealist paintings of a candle. The candle Tse lit burned slowly, eventually becoming the same height as the one on the album cover, forging a fleeting coincidence of two realities. Richter's 1983 candle images have been associated with gestures of protest in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), while also being compared to 17th-century *vanitas* paintings that symbolize the ephemerality of our existence. The work also evokes Tse's earlier video *Light* (2014), a sustained close-up of a burning candle wick that slowly begins to re-grow over time because the video is chronologically reversed at its midpoint—much like the cycles of formation and deformation of clay on a pottery wheel seen in the video *Shaping*.

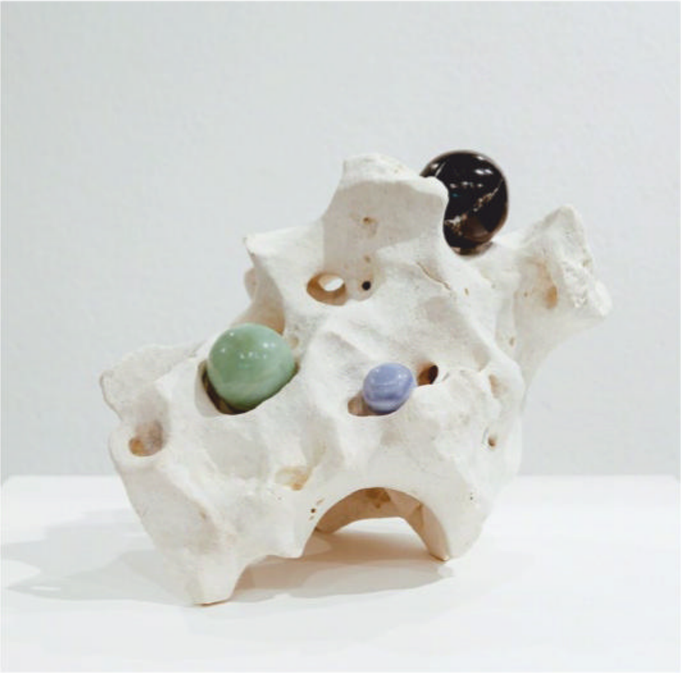
Tse's artworks also frequently make reference to famously contemplative art from the past. Her interest in scholars' rocks can be seen in two bodies of work: *Nested* (2016–19) and *Stone Collection* (2017). In the former, Tse selected pieces of limestone, into whose niches she placed colorful marble balls. There is an emphasis on arrangement within these sculptures, on the balance between the largely unsculpted forms of the limestone and the highly refined spheres. The rocks and the orbs function as a microcosm of the solar system. In 2019 works from the *Nested* series, Tse used copper mineral rocks, with tourmaline and obsidian balls. She values the interrelation of the elements and the tension of holding and being held: "Being nested is also a metaphor for our balance and our consciousness in the present moment."

Tse's *Stone Collection* series was shown in the touring exhibition "Nested"—which originated in 2017 at MUDAM in Luxembourg and traveled over the course of two years to Aargauer Kunsthaus in Aarau, Switzerland, the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, and finally the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. For the rocks Tse created custom pedestals—primarily solid-colored, modernist bases—that are formally at odds with the classical Chinese associations of the stones. "I like to create contrasts," she noted in our conversation. For her, *Stone Collection*, like *Entanglements*, is about "taking the time for contemplation" as well as "being receptive to nature," as these different rocks can begin to resemble mountains, caves, clouds, and waves, depending on a viewer's associations.

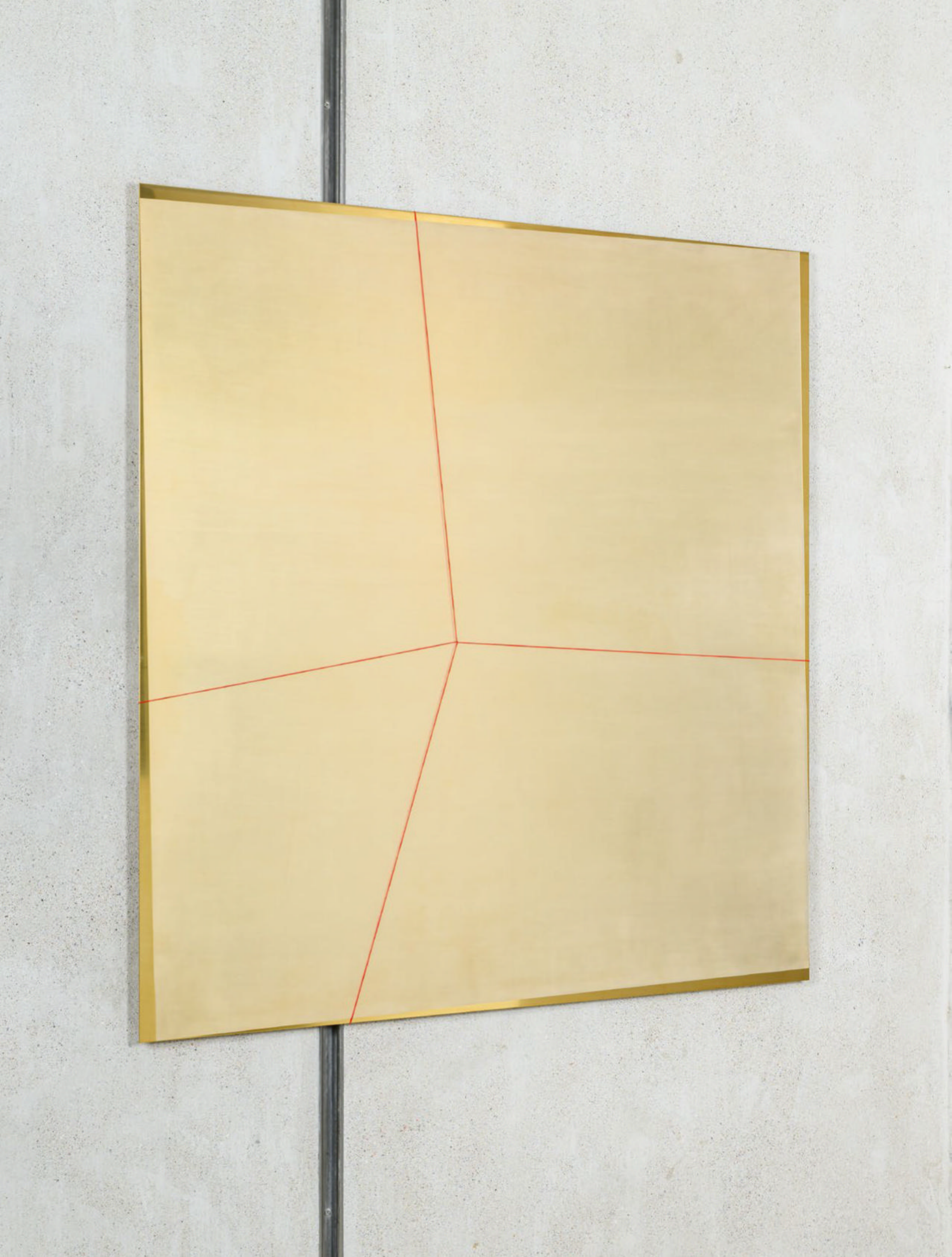
Installation view of **SU-MEI TSE**'s *Shaping*, 2019, video projection with sound: 11 min 50 sec. Photo by Samson Wong Pak Hang. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.



SU-MEI TSE, *Nested #3*, 2016, limestone, polished mineral, marble balls, 30×33×26 cm. Courtesy the artist and Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.



SU-MEI TSE, *Nested #2*, 2016, limestone, polished mineral, marble balls, 30×21×20 cm. Courtesy the artist and Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.



SU-MEI TSE, *Sealed (#3)*, 2024, brass, silicone, red string, 110 × 110 cm. Photo by Samson Wong Pak Hang. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong.

Tse works with words as well as with materials "as an anchor" that holds viewers in the present moment. We talked about the small sculpture *Ear (nested)* (2024), which was located near the gallery's entrance, comprising a found bird's nest atop an Italian-style table. Sitting in the nest is a black-and-white image of an ear from a Greek sculpture, which appears like a Surrealist sign in this readymade sculpture, inviting visitors to eavesdrop or listen carefully—Tse specifically employed the German word *lauschen*.

The shape of the ear is echoed in the shape of the shells of the sculpture *Survival (shells)* (2024), a ball of seashells around 20 centimeters in diameter that sat in a vitrine near *Ear (nested)*. On the wall in that downstairs space were three brass plates, *Sealed 1–3* (2024), each 110 centimeters square with two intersecting pieces of red string, the pairs positioned differently in each work to divide the surface into four distinct spaces. A semi-translucent sheet of silicone rests slightly askew on each panel. Tse explained that the form refers to *tsutsumu*—the Japanese art of beautifully wrapping objects, especially gifts, to protect them and show respect to others. In Tse's compositions, the intersecting red strings create abstract formations on the surfaces and faintly allude to her training with a stringed instrument.

Words, or linguistic associations, are part of the web of relations that Tse spins in her installations. On the ledge of one landing at Kiang Malingue was a 12-centimeter cracked ball of earth, *Dorodango* (2024), named after the Japanese practice of hand-shaping and polishing mud balls. Behind on the gallery wall was *God sleeps in stone* (2024): stainless-steel lettering quoting a passage from Sufi mystic Ibn al-ʿArabī (1165–1240): "God sleeps in stone / breathes in plants / dreams in animals and awakens in man."

While she spoke about poetry, Tse is always looking in other directions as well. Her sculpture of a fountain, *Many Spoken Words* (2009–17), shown in "Nested" and in her previous exhibition at Kiang Malingue in Hong Kong in 2017, is a classical-looking European fountain with ink flowing from the top to a larger pool at the bottom. Here, Tse said, she was interested in "the idea of undoing the words, getting back from the written word to the spoken word, and back to an original idea and the origin of things. The flow of ink as an ongoing loop."

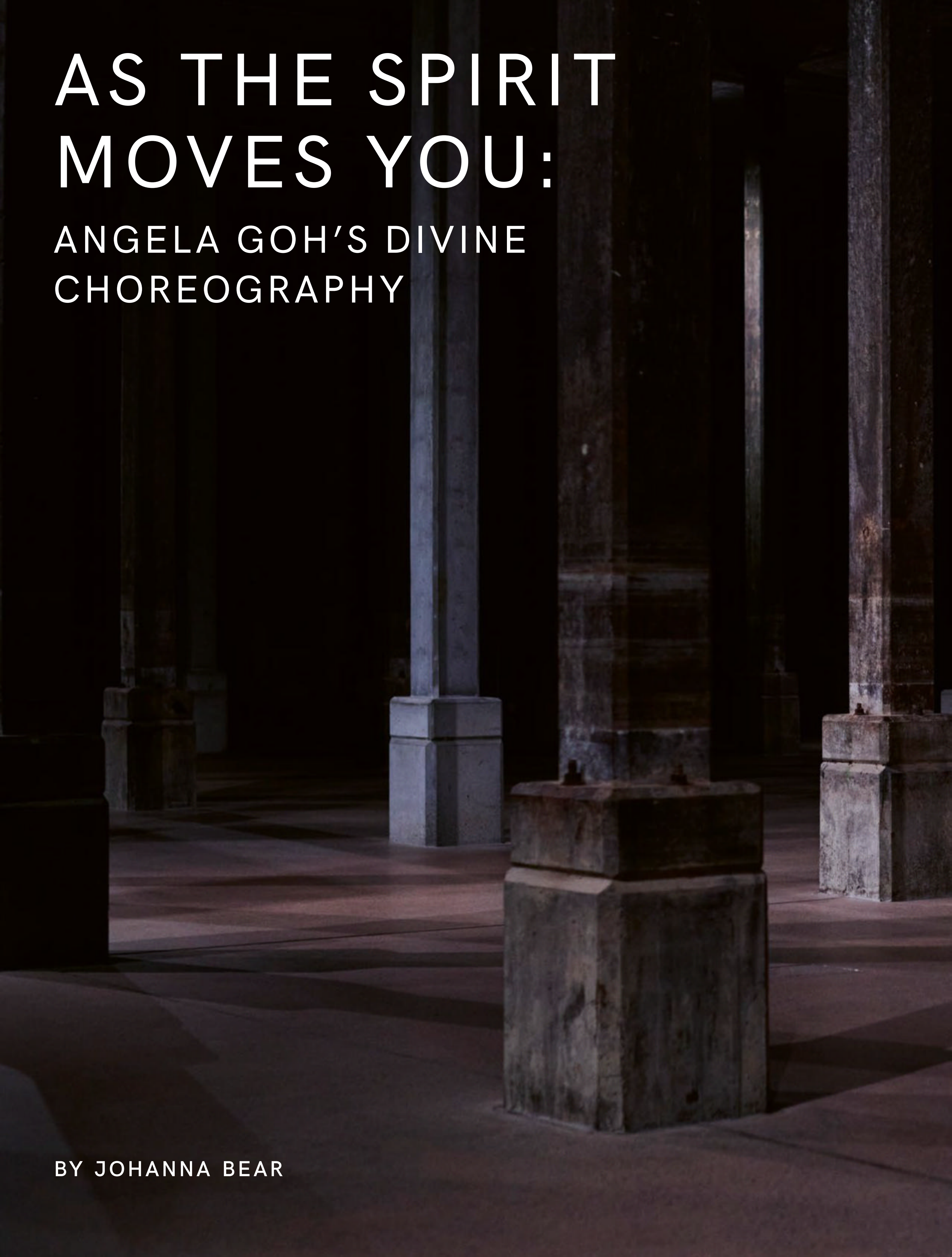
Returning to her musical training, she told me that she still sees herself as a musician but has found that art is a better, or freer, way to express herself and translate what she has to say. She also noted that being an artist means she does not have to specialize in one skill like a professional musician, and she is able to be receptive to what she sees.

Finally, after we looked at her photographs of koi swimming in a pond whose surface reflects the sky and trees, Tse discussed her idea of the "poetical view," an approach that pervades many of her works. *Mistelpartition (Mistle Score)* (2006), for example, comprises a video and a series of still images that depict round bundles of mistletoe lodged in rows of barren winter trees. She recounted how, while she was driving through a landscape and listening to Dmitri Shostakovich's *Cello Concerto No. 1 in E flat major* (1959), the natural bunches appeared to her as musical notes on a score. As an artist, she often starts with "things that I find that come to me at the right moment."

Regarding how she composes her exhibitions, Tse reflected: "The way I work is connected to memory. The chronology is not so important. Everything is a whole for me, an older work can always fit with the others. Here in Hong Kong, I created new works, but they all have their existence—not in a particular time."

AS THE SPIRIT MOVES YOU:

ANGELA GOH’S DIVINE CHOREOGRAPHY



BY JOHANNA BEAR

ANGELA GOH, *Axe Arc Echo*, 2023, performance, at The Tank, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2023. Photo by Lucy Parakhina. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

ANGELA GOH

In deconstructing the mechanics of gesture, Angela Goh remakes notions of space, time, and truth. For over a decade, the Sydney-based dancer and choreographer has cultivated a unique kinetic language charged with beguiling precision and theoretical rigor. She raises metaphysical questions about what shapes and unravels the world by exploring how movement makes meaning. What distinguishes a gesture of affection from one of threat? When does a body no longer seem human? Such musings enthrall Goh, who eschews definitive meaning to instead reach into the recesses of imagination.

The magic of Goh's work is belied by the simplicity of its staging. Her performances generally take place in gallery zones or white-box theater sets; props are often commonplace and used sparingly. Her attire—typically a t-shirt, sneakers, and jeans—matches that of the audience and seems antithetical to her bewitching choreographic feats. Other performers might use costumes or set design to build a narrative or fantasy, but Goh's restraint fixes attention on even the most minute of motions. She makes the banal transcendent.

When I interviewed Goh, she told me her work possesses a "suspension of disbelief that a viewer is complicit in, because my body will be positioned or moving in ways that produce strange illusions or uncanny or surreal qualities." This makes for a dynamic interplay between reality and the imagined, crafted through her use of repetition, inversion, and precise manipulation. "It relies on knowing and not knowing at the same time," Goh said, "or perhaps knowing better but letting a bit of enchantment in, letting yourself get carried away and then ending up somewhere unexpected in your own experience and thoughts." As though viewing Rorschach inkblots, audiences filter her works through the prism of their individual psyches.

This sense of transformation is essential to Goh's practice. Her works often shapeshift across contexts, from theaters and dance festivals to experimental venues and major art institutions, which situates her performances at a transdisciplinary nexus. Nonetheless, Goh's theater origins remain formative. "Works that I make for theater seem to have long lives in terms of being a foundation for many ideas that can be extrapolated into further works," she explained, "simply because in a theater, the mode of watching is really different. You're taking people from beginning to end and can craft an arc." This multifaceted repertoire means Goh has a distinct approach to narrative, which she typically subverts in favor of abstraction.

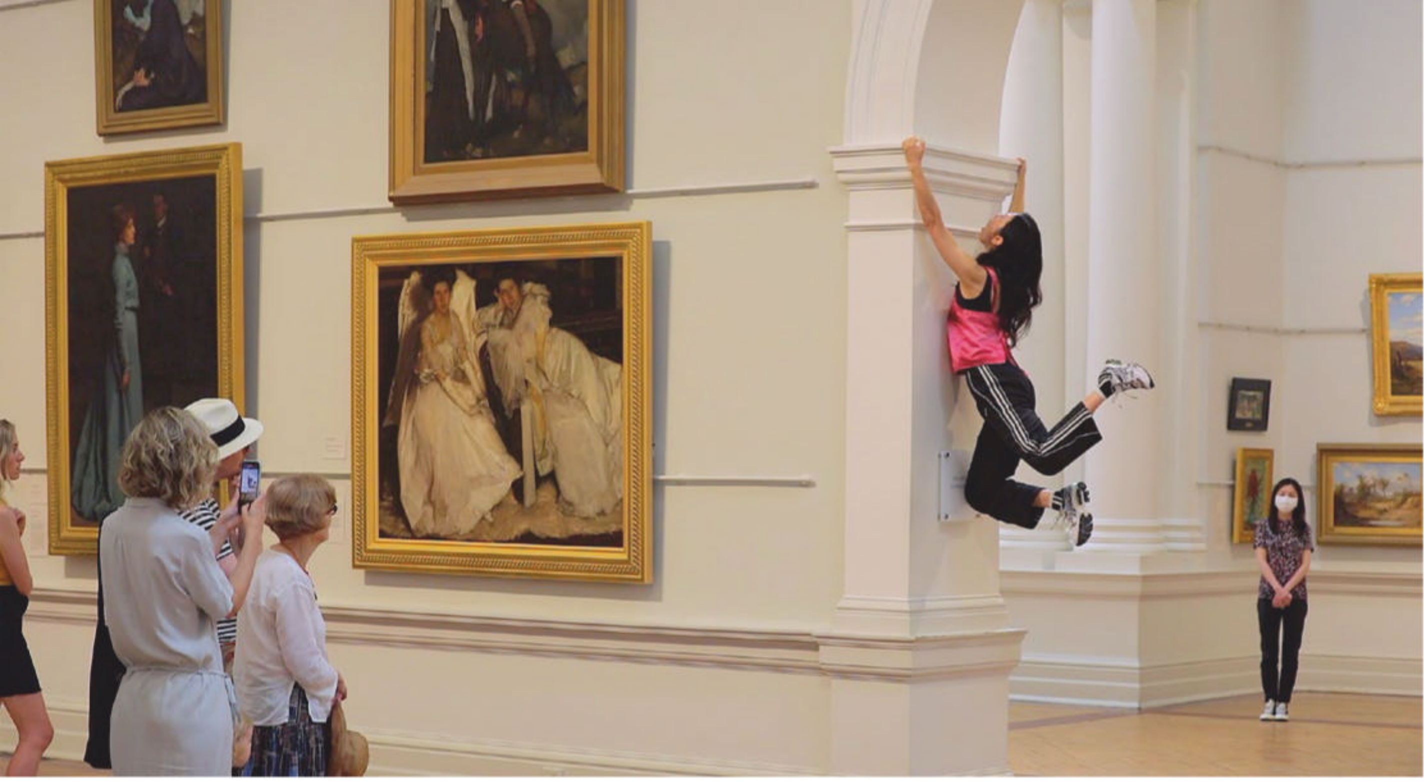
Commissioned by the London-based nonprofit Auto Italia, Goh's performance *Body Loss* (2017) is one of her earliest projects developed outside a theater context. It is also her most exhibited work, with presentations at various venues in Australia, Europe, the US, and Mexico. Last year, *Body Loss* was acquired for the permanent collection of the University of Melbourne's art museums, making it the first choreographic performance to be purchased by an Australian institution.

Although *Body Loss*, like many of her works, is site-specific and adapted for each venue, it follows a fixed logic. It unfolds within the museum, where a woman (either Goh or another female performer) nonchalantly walks into view and sits before a loop machine. She sings a ghostly tune into a microphone before transmuting her vocalization into an echoing, sirenic chorus. Then, mouth agape, she makes museal architecture a site for play by crawling, arching, and slithering across surfaces. As she descends stairs, climbs columns, and hangs off ledges, she commands focus and resists an objectifying gaze. Attention is channeled not to the performer's physical form, but to her movements, and in animating her body she animates her environment, recasting otherwise ignored objects of infrastructure into vital props that hold the tension of the room as well as her body weight. Within the hushed decorum of the museum, Goh's transgressive acts draw reverent onlookers rather than security staff. She manipulates space and social norms in a way that feels animalistic and supernatural—uncanny for this context.

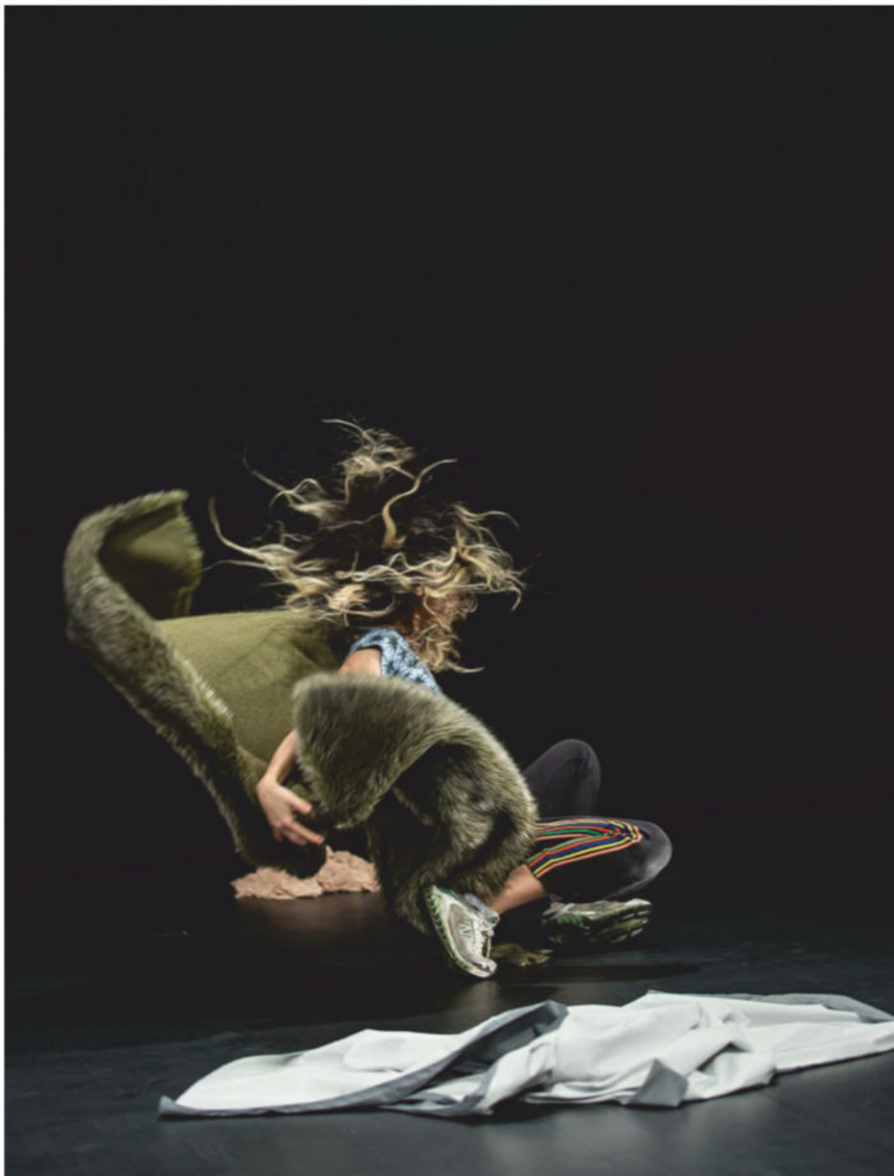
Goh further mediates the relationship between performer, building, and audience, with her mouth—a passage that devours, divulges, and connects. "The mouth, the face, and the hands are communicative areas of the body through which we socially think and understand each other," Goh said. "You can disrupt assumptions about what they mean, until they become both familiar and do something different." As in all her works, the performer's neutral expression creates ambiguity. The silent scream in *Body Loss* could be one of terror, surprise, boredom, or passion, as Goh exploits the many emotions her visage might impart. Some iterations of the performance end with her masticating berries that stain her chin blood-red, which might read as abject body horror, or a warning against the guzzling of water, land, and people in a capitalist world. Through a dualistic act of consumption and waste, the mouth becomes a figurative merchant of violence and gluttony.

Elements of the performance first appeared in the theater work *Desert Body Creep* (2016)— where the vocal looping of *Body Loss* originated—and reemerged in *Pattern Recognition* (2023). In the latter piece, Goh accentuates her mouth with gesticulations of her tongue, hand signals that mimic lips, and by using her fingers to seemingly gouge the flesh of her cheeks from within. These actions slip between haunting and humorous without settling into either, as Goh attunes us to the nuanced riddles of gesture. As in Ted Chiang's 1998 novella *Story of Your Life*, which later inspired Denis Villeneuve's science fiction film *Arrival* (2016), Goh speaks an otherworldly language of abstracted physical expression, awakening new possibilities for communication.

The extraterrestrial quality of Goh's movement also unsettles temporality. This began early with *Predictable Dances* (2014–), a work that distorts Western notions of linear time. Before each performance, Goh employs a psychic to predict what will transpire, including her movements, costume, music, and props. She then fulfils the prophecy, with outcomes that can surprise and contrast with the slow subtlety of her other works. In 2015, for instance, during a performance with the New York-based organization Movement Research, she began by unrolling a strip of blue cellophane on the floor and later stood, energetically circling her arms in large figure eights as upbeat 1970s pop-rock music played. By actualizing various premonitions, Goh raises questions of predetermined fate and control over destiny. "I am always very focused on understanding how time can be constructed, and how and what time and duration does to a viewer," Goh pointed out. "I have a real curiosity about dramaturgy and the techniques in

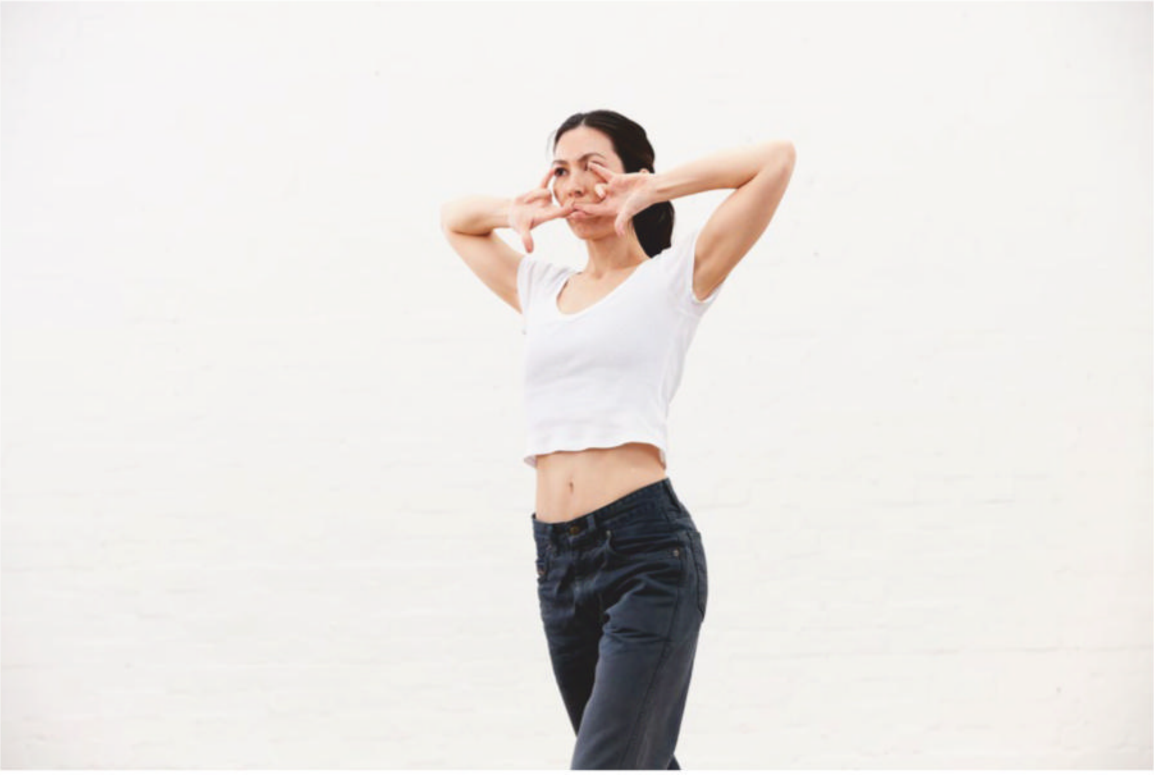


ANGELA GOH, *Body Loss*, 2017, performance at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2020. Photo by Hospital Hill. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.



ANGELA GOH, *Desert Body Creep*, 2016, performance at Space New York, New York, 2018. Photo by Maria Baranova. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

ANGELA GOH, *Pattern Recognition*, 2023, performance at Fine Arts, Sydney, 2023. Photo by Zan Wimberley. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts.



ANGELA GOH, *Axe Arc Echo*, 2023, performance at The Tank, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2023. Photo by Lucy Parakhina. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

different mediums used to take people on a journey; how things transform through time."

Reconfigured pasts, presents, and futures also feature in *Axe Arc Echo* (2023), a grueling two-hour performance created for the subterranean Tank at Sydney's Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW). Accompanied by stark lighting from Govin Ruben and growling electronics by composer Corin Ileto, two of her regular collaborators, Goh traversed the cavernous space like a ritualistic droid. Her choreography featured repeated twisting, sliding, and swiveling motions that she once described as "hiding backward movement inside forward movement and vice versa." As in her other works, precision and repetition are key tactics of disruption. Her complex movements multiplied until they became disorienting and yet harmonized with the Tank's grid of concrete columns, which both fragmented and framed our view of the performer.

Rather than fighting the heft of the architecture, Goh used its scale and depth for dramatic effect. Her motions referenced the site's former life of industry, conflict, and extraction as a naval oil bunker during World War II. When Goh momentarily sparked a lighter that had been stashed in her pocket, for example, she alluded to a time when igniting this flame would have been catastrophic. She further amplified these sometimes barely perceptible gestures by situating the audience along one edge of the Tank, allowing her to cast a singular, uninterrupted spell over the space.

More implicitly, the work echoes a contemporary consciousness of disillusionment and existential angst that project curator Lisa Catt, AGNSW's curator of international contemporary art, has likened to doomscrolling. A downward spiral into alternate worlds—digital or otherwise—is appealing when uncertainty from the assaults of war, environmental disaster, and Trumpian politics looms large across screens and psyches. Like doomscrolling, *Axe Arc Echo* seemingly evaporated time, as though hours had condensed into moments. The performance ended with Goh suspended in a temporal loop of trance-like motion, as though traveling through deep geological history to reemerge somewhere before or beyond the Anthropocene. Is this escape or demise? We're left humbled by the fictions of time, our mortality, and humanity's attempts to find order in life's mysteries.

The seeds of *Axe Arc Echo* were sown by an earlier theater work from 2020, *Sky Blue Mythic*, which won the Keir Choreographic Award that same year. The latter performance leads us through a maze of possible realities where the body becomes alien, and the alien embodied. Goh uses color to signal this upending. Early in the performance she spills a can of orange papaya milk across the floor, its fluorescence complementary and opposite to the blue of her jeans. Meanwhile, Ruben's lighting design emphasizes the capacities and limitations of ordinary human vision. As Ileto's soundtrack crescendos, the light shifts from crisp white to a blinking climax of red, blue, and green to reference the three types of cones of human chromatic perception—far fewer than some living creatures have. By drawing attention to what filters our visual senses, Goh hints at alternate modes of more-than-human sight.

Sky Blue Mythic oscillates between visions of the cosmos contained within the body and the cosmos as a body where humans are infinitesimal. Goh's references include the 19th-century tragic ballet *Giselle*, Jorge Luis Borges's 1941 short story *The Garden of Forking Paths*, but also Copernican trauma and non-anthropocentric perspectives that might recalibrate humanity's approach to the climate crisis. Such topics populate today's cultural zeitgeist, but Goh offers a fresh take. As she puts it: "I was thinking about dancing in the third person in order to work with technical qualities that could imaginatively shift how things are perceived." Sometimes this is signaled literally—as when she spins a sundial on the floor—or through acts of supreme control that produce illusory, out-of-body effects. Goh rotates seamlessly on all fours as though moved by a revolving platform. She sways with the mirrored

ANGELA GOH, *Sky Blue Mythic*, 2020, performance at Carriageworks, Sydney, 2020. Photo by Zan Wimberley. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

ANGELA GOH, *Sky Blue Mythic*, 2020, performance at Carriageworks, Sydney, 2020. Photo by Zan Wimberley. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

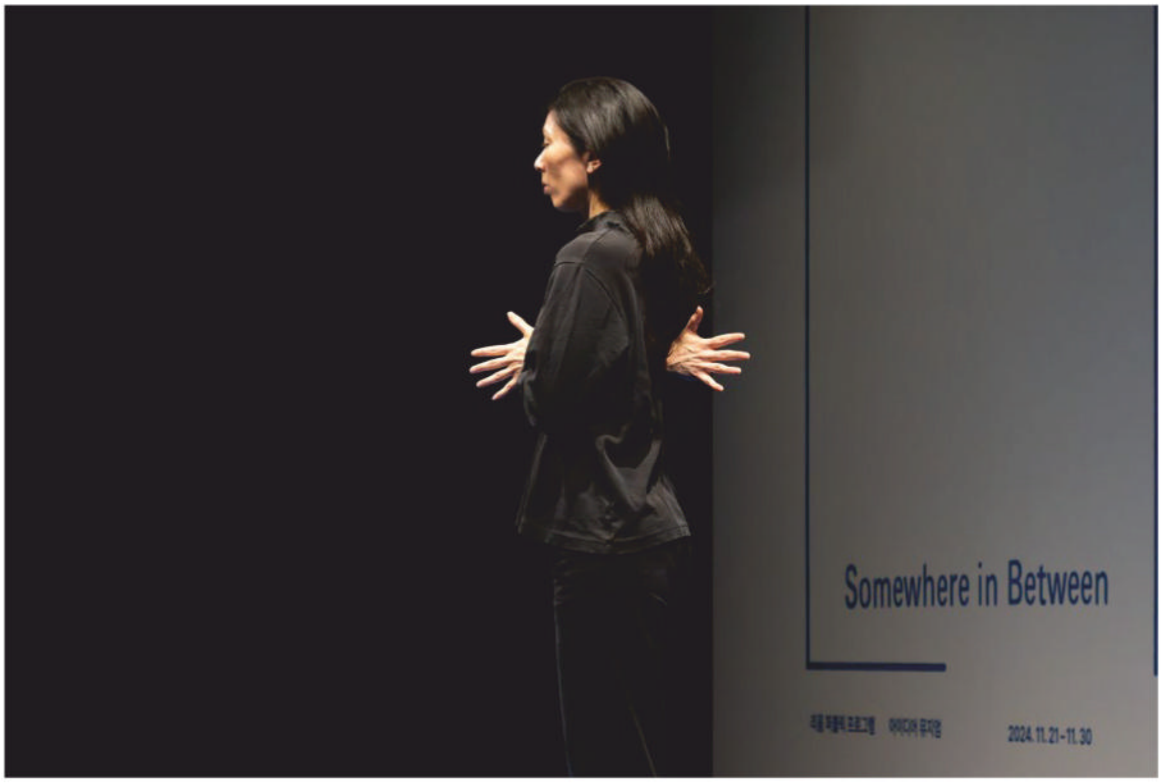
ANGELA GOH, *Uncanny Valley Girl*, 2018, performance at Carriageworks, Sydney, 2018. Photo by Rafaela Pandolfini. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

precision of video footage being played, then rewound. As her eyes look up, fluttering, fingers twist into a butterfly-like mask with a phantasmic second mouth. Once again, duplication and exactness are Goh's savvy tools.

This acute attention to physical detail comes from Goh's early ballet training, which was later supplemented by contemporary dance classes. She tells me: "In ballet you train your body in such a way that the effect produced is extremely different. Everything looks effortless and ethereal, even though it's the hardest thing." Goh remains interested in ballet techniques of creative visualization and describes a balancing exercise where she would "imagine that the tibia and fibula—the two bones that run down the lower part of your leg—are like tongs that clamp onto your ankle bone. You're rewiring your body through imaginative sensation to achieve a really physical act."

Goh's latest project, *Total* (2024), continues this extension into other worlds, other bodies, and other modes of being. It premiered at Seoul's Leeum Museum of Art last November, followed by performances for the 11th Asia Pacific Triennial at Brisbane's Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art. Here in Australia, I saw Goh embody the work in December before it was performed by Chloe Chignell this April. In an unassuming all-black outfit, Goh began by stalking the edge of her encircling crowd. Unlike *Axe Arc Echo*, this work was compact and in the round, its modest footprint giving the audience a proximity to the performer that heightened each bodily pulse. After greeting us with a worm-like arm wave, reminiscent of non-playable characters from video games whose existence lacks agency, Goh produced an intricate tapestry of gesture that was celestial, dark, and absurd.

Later, as Goh sat still with one arm extended to the floor, a single finger spasmed. The movement built until Goh's whole hand seems besieged by a spiritual possession or parasitic invasion. She appears to be at the mercy of another. Perhaps this explains her self-described "affinity for puppetry." As she says: "Part of what I'm trying to execute is when something comes alive apart from me; a part of the body is animated and operating on its own." This recalls earlier, more prop-heavy theater works where Goh personates fembot cyborgs in *Uncanny Valley Girl* (2018), or metamorphoses between worm, ghost, and zombie in *Desert Body Creep*. It also reminds me of the book *Glitch Feminism* (2020) by curator and



ANGELA GOH, *Total*, 2024, performance at Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul, 2024. Photo by Cheolki Hong. Courtesy the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney.

writer Legacy Russell, which characterizes the “glitch” (i.e., “an error, a mistake, a failure to function”) as a liberatory force that “aims to make abstract again that which has been forced into an uncomfortable and ill-defined material: the body.” By abstracting the limits of her physical body, Goh liberates the mind.

As *Total* continues, the choreography follows sequences of revolving and rhythmic motion. In one, Goh slowly spins with each of her palms fanned out at the front and back of her torso, opening and closing into fists in sync with back-and-forth rocking motions. As she continues to turn, her hands perform the motions of a game of rock, paper, scissors before imitating handguns being fired. Whether these gestures denote menace, childlike play—or something else—is intentionally unclear. The performance concludes with Goh approaching audience members and coaxing them to admire the wriggling thumbs cradled in her arms like a newborn alien. “You have to remake your body,” Goh reflected. “I try to make things so extremely precise and so specific that a viewer can’t mistake it for something that they already know.” With *Total*, Goh scrutinizes, dismantles, and reconstructs how a sum total is built from many parts.

Although it is easy to project narratives onto Goh’s oeuvre, her objectives lie elsewhere. “Dance has a history of being a mode of storytelling, so stories might come out of my works because people who see them will to try to make sense of what they are,” she explains. “But I’m not using time, or the body, in that way.” Instead, Goh transmutes gesture into something beyond the physical. “I think imagination is one of the most powerful and potent things to possess. Thinking of what is not yet, not here, not quite, or not done is where the possibility to affect the world around you comes from. Of course, imagination can produce awful things, but it is also what produces joy, humor, and the unexpected.”

Goh reminds us that human understanding is mediated by the fleshy cocoons that carry us, the threads of intuition that guide us, and the societal norms that are fabricated to rationalize our lives. Yet hers is also a choreography of alchemy, akin to melting a sword to forge a flute, in which the imagined and unfamiliar open us to new possibilities for knowing, navigating, and shaping our world.

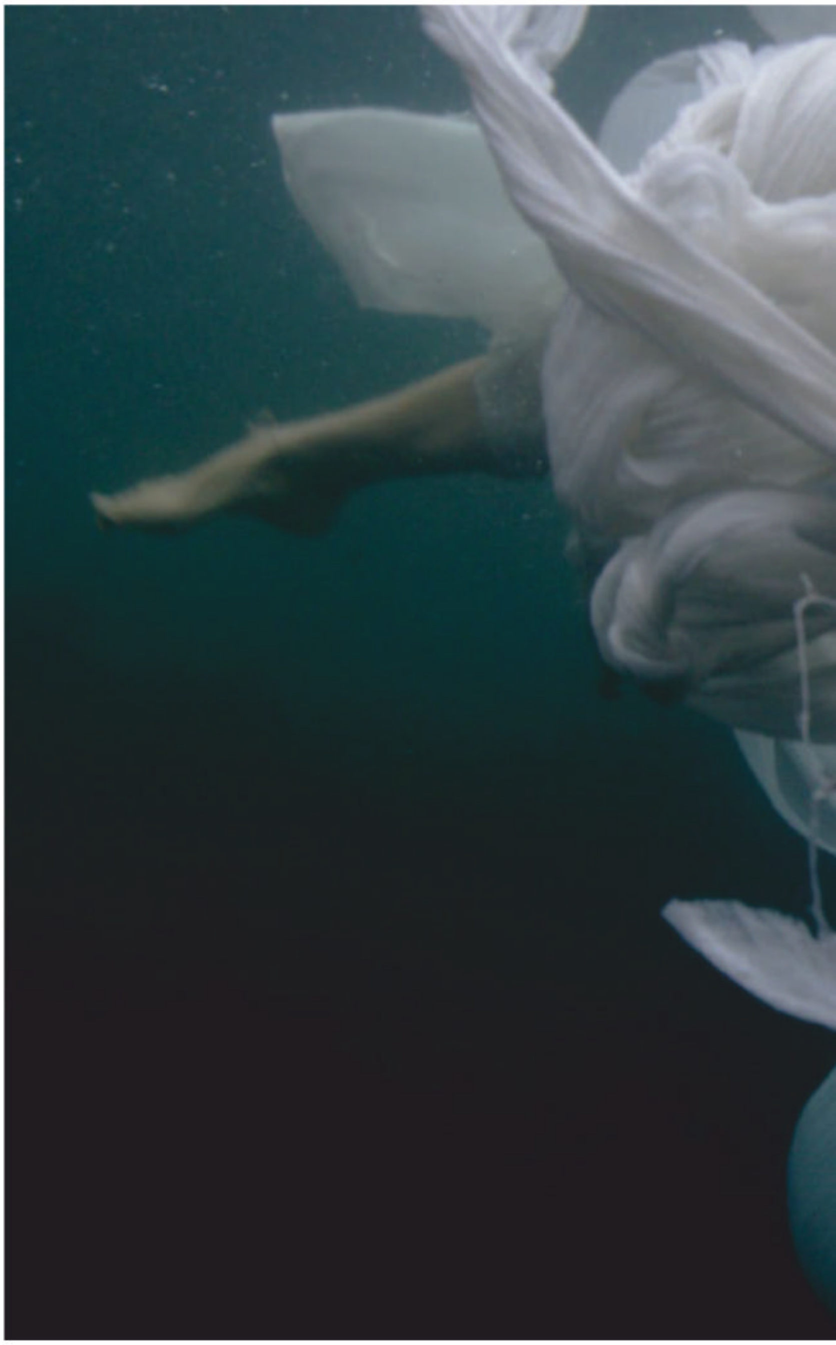
A will to psychic reclamation pervades the work of video artist Jane Jin Kaisen, who grew up as a Korean adoptee in Denmark. Now 45 and a professor of media arts at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, she has spent two decades imaginatively processing the cultural ethos of her birthplace. The undertaking has gained her multiple honors, including that of representing South Korea at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. More recently, Kaisen was one of four artists awarded the 2024 Korea Artist Prize from the country's National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) and the Seoul Broadcasting System Foundation.

Behind Kaisen's seven large-screen videos—presented together in a single open space at the MMCA under the collective title "Ieodo (Island Beyond the Sea)" (2022–24)—lies a highly fraught local history. "Ieodo" is the name of a mythical island that natives of Jeju Island, where Kaisen was born, long believed would welcome the souls of those lost at sea. Jeju itself is today a popular vacation spot. But the 1948–49 Jeju Uprising against autocratic rule by South Korea cost the island 30,000 lives, and in 1980, the year of Kaisen's birth, Jeju joined the Gwangju Uprising, which protested a national coup and was also suppressed with deadly force. Currently, the term "Ieodo" is linked to Socotra Rock, a submerged reef 190 kilometers from Jeju that supports the Ieodo Ocean Research Station, constructed by South Korea in defiance of China's territorial claims.

Kaisen's *Wreckage* (2024) includes footage of captured Japanese armaments being shipped out after World War II, marking the end of Japan's 35-year occupation of Korea. But more typical of the artist's layered, allusive approach is *Burial of This Order* (2022), which shows a group of oddly costumed "misfits"—from musicians to radical environmentalists to trans people—carrying a coffin through an abandoned Jeju Island resort. Evoking ancient times and various nature spirits, the wanderers improvise a funeral ceremony for the present-day social order that has sought to marginalize them. *Halmang* (2023), titled with the respectful term "grandmother," meditates poetically on eight Jeju women who spent decades free-diving every day to harvest seafood. Now positioned by Kaisen on windy seaside lava rocks, they ritually fold and unfurl long swaths of *sochang*, a white cotton cloth used for such traditionally "feminine" items as diapers, blankets, sanitary pads, and towels.

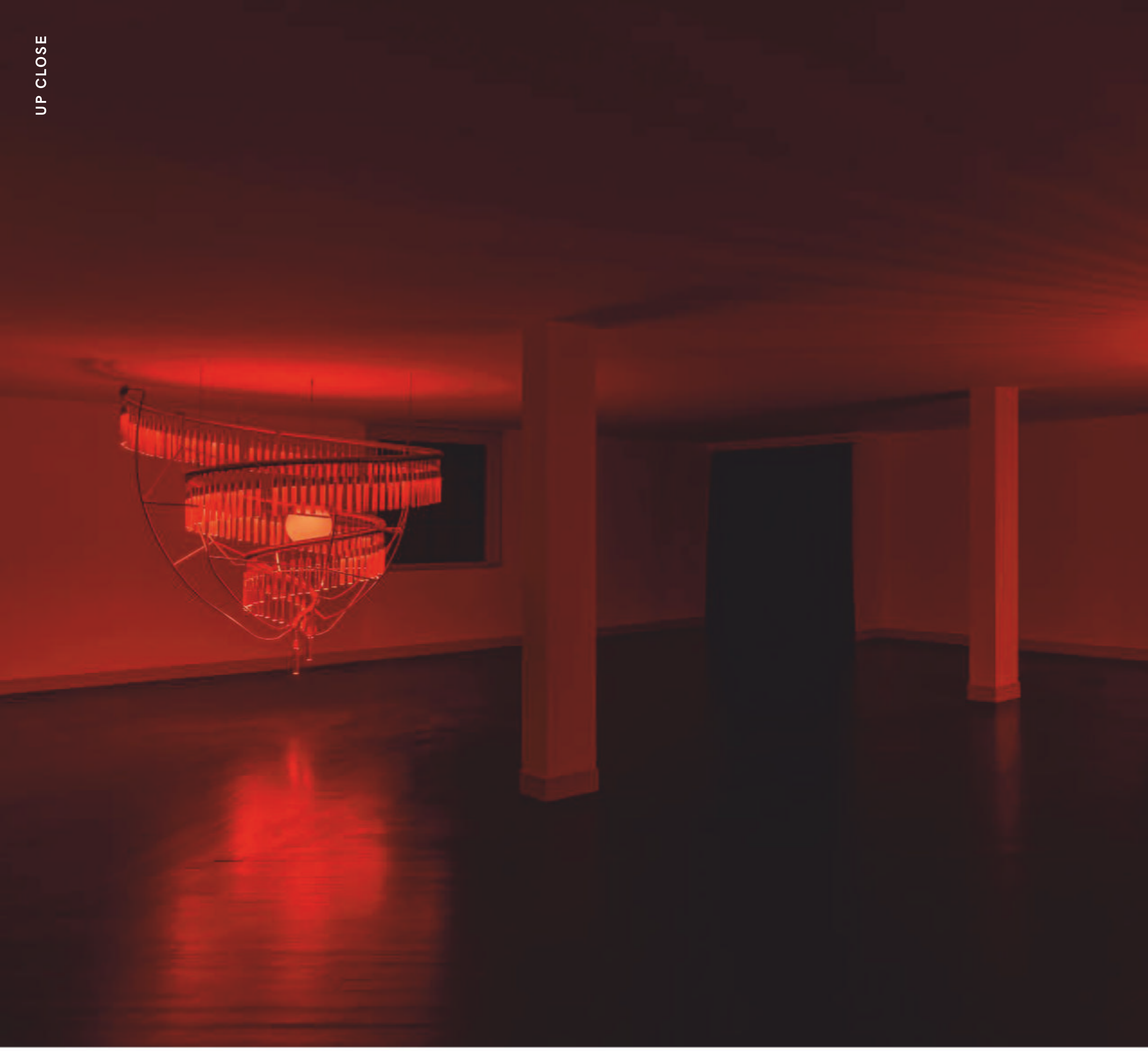
Most mesmerizing of all, however, is *Offering* (2023), in which younger women—some of them breath-holding to the grimacing, bubble-releasing edge of endurance—perform a slow underwater choreography while wrapped in billowing lengths of *sochang*. In lingering cloudlike swirls, the fabric transcends its mundane daily usages to evoke the timeless passage from life to death to afterlife.

RICHARD VINE

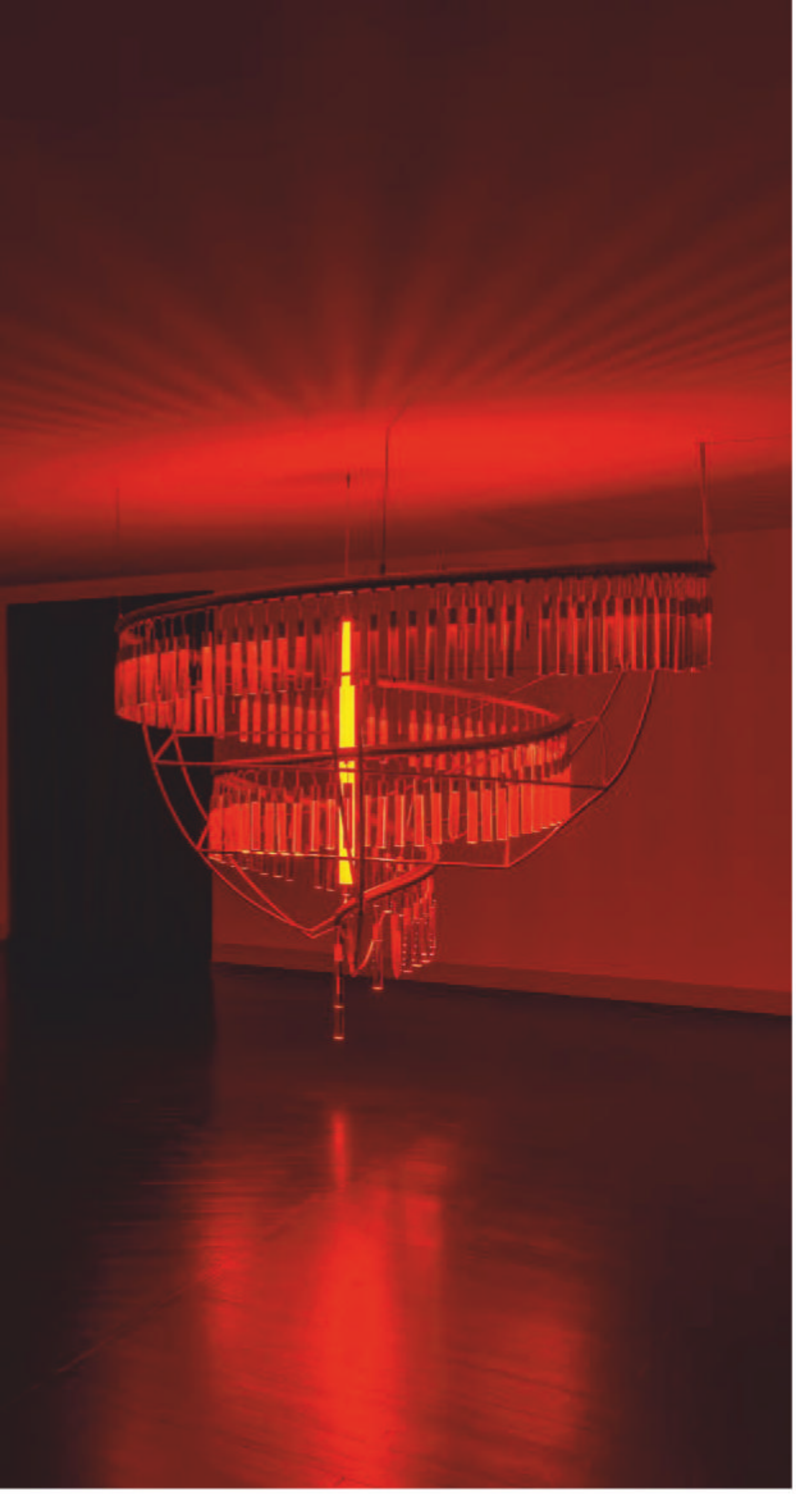


JANE JIN KAISEN, *Offering*, 2023, still image of single-channel video, 4K, color, stereo sound: 12 min. Courtesy the artist.

JANE JIN KAISEN



Installation view of **SHUANG LI**’s *Demolition Lovers*, 2024, installation with sound, light, shadow, metal, acrylic: 20 min 10 sec, at Prada Rong Zhai, Shanghai, 2024. Photo by Alessandro Wang. Courtesy Prada Rong Zhai.



SHUANG LI

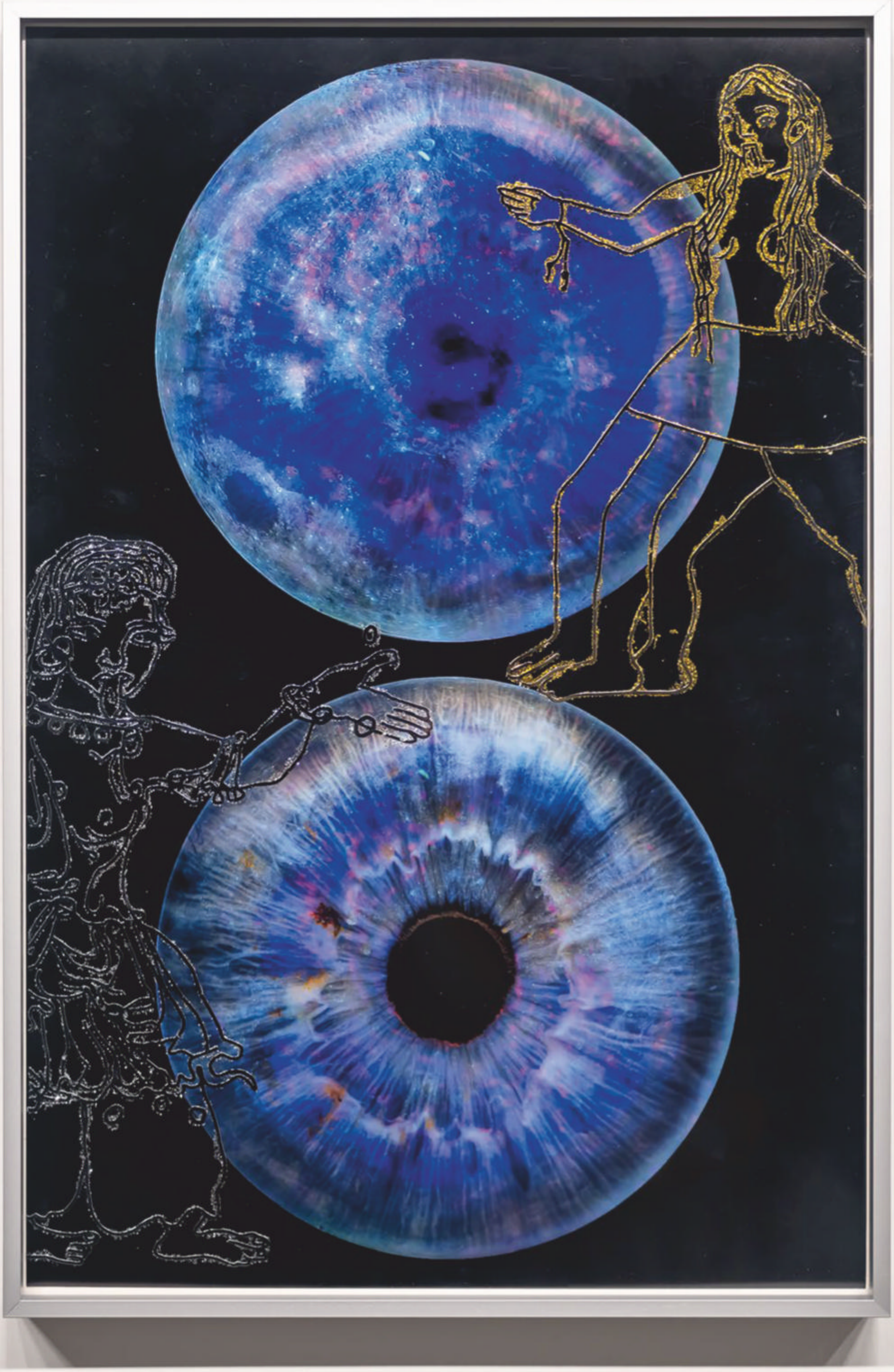
In Italo Calvino's short story *The Distance of the Moon* (1965), people once climbed ladders to reach the moon until gravity suddenly shifted, leaving some forever stranded in space. During the Covid-19 pandemic, stuck in Europe and unable to return home to China, Shuang Li found unexpected solace in Calvino's tale of cosmic separation. For the Berlin- and Geneva-based artist, the distance from family—though measured not in light years, but in unanswered messages, missed calls, and perhaps frozen screens—felt just as vast.

Borrowing the title of Calvino's story, Li's exhibition at Prada Rong Zhai in Shanghai presented new resin sculptures, videos, and installations. One light and sound piece, *Demolition Lovers* (2024), was born from pandemic-era WeChat conversations between the artist and her mother. The work transforms digital messages into a luminous meditation on contemporary disconnection: What remains when words sent digitally lose their meaning, when emojis fail to bridge emotional chasms, and when video calls create more distance than intimacy?

The installation comprises two large chandeliers, each combined with wind chimes in a spiral formation, almost like two upended versions of Tatlin's Tower. Positioned diagonally within the room—one representing the artist and the other her mother—they engage in a visual dialogue synchronized with electronic beats by the artist's musician friend DJ Hyph11E. For 20 minutes, the twin chandeliers pulse and dim, flash and fade, as their colors shift from clinical white to warm amber and piercing red, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in discord. Here, while language dissolves and dissipates with the lights and music, Li's work creates a rhythm that mirrors the staccato nature of online messaging—the sudden bursts of communication followed by long silences; moments of connection punctuated by drifting minds.

Li's work speaks to a specifically Chinese context, the one-child-policy generation's complex relationship with family, amplified by the recent pandemic's enforced separations. Her exploration of failed communication and the maternal bond resonates with works across different traditions and mediums. Writers and artists have long grappled with the experience of familial disconnection: Vietnamese American poet Ocean Vuong, who wrote tender letters to his mother, in a language that she cannot read, or Louise Bourgeois, who throughout her career returned obsessively to the maternal figure and the ambivalent nature of motherhood. Ultimately, Li's work captures a digital aphasia in our age—where words slip away from their intended meanings, never quite arriving at their destinations, leaving behind only traces of emotion.

LOUIS LU



RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE, *Untitled*, 2025, glitter drawings on photographic prints, 46 × 30.5 cm. Courtesy Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong.

RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve at a rapid pace, how do we define our humanity? In recent years, artists around the world have investigated this question, not only employing AI in imaginative ways, but also looking back to Indigenous knowledge and stories from centuries ago.

In their exhibition at Hanart TZ Gallery in Hong Kong, Raqs Media Collective—the New Delhi-based artists and researchers Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta—debuted 60 mixed-medium and multimedia works. Ranging from AI and moving images to photographs, diagrams, and textiles, the selection reflected the group's philosophical inquiry into the conflict between the rise of AI and our complex origins as human beings.

In the gallery's cavernous industrial interior, the silence was palpable. None of the works had titles or labels, their absence encouraging viewers to focus on the art itself and the experience of moving through the space—a nod, perhaps, to the exhibition's title, "Wayfaring Ways To Be," which Raqs associated in press materials with the human act of walking upright.

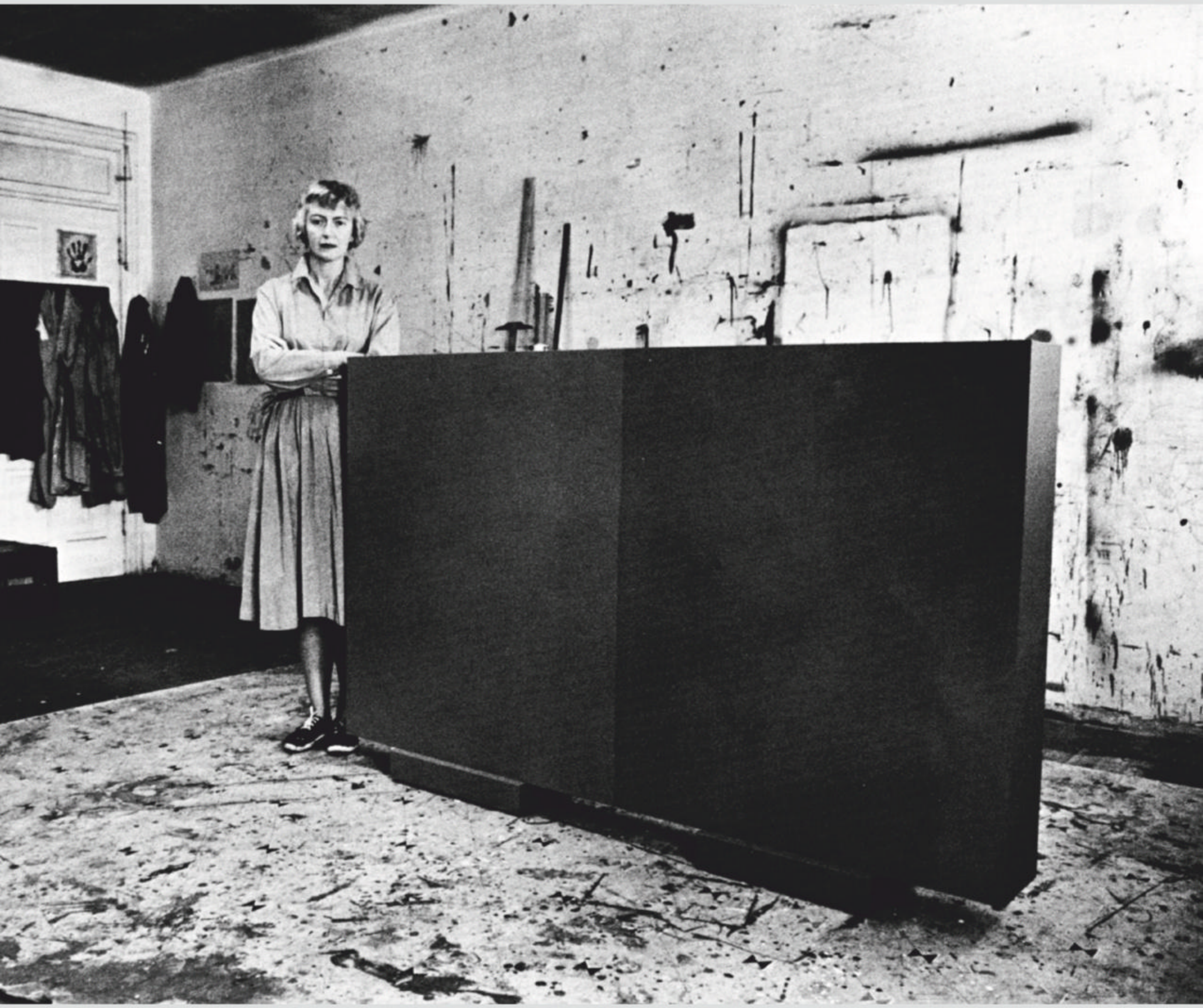
An AI-generated, quasi-abstract landscape swathed the back wall, its images resembling seed pods floating through the air, perhaps signifying a genesis. A series of hanging installations swayed softly in the silence; mythological beings and human-animal hybrids from Hindu legends had been meticulously machine-stitched into sheer fabric or digitally printed on flexible acrylic sheets—as though frozen in ritualistic dance. On the surrounding walls, a series of computer-manipulated images of natural and industrial landscapes was overlaid with glitter drawings of more folkloric characters, while sheets of wallpaper featured anatomical illustrations, sketches of plants, and evolutionary drawings. Then, at the show's culmination, a vast projection of an AI-generated winged arthropod loomed out of the darkness, its glossy, hyper-technologized appearance contrasting with that of the other figures portrayed throughout the show. Today, creating a "mythology" does not require extended time and intricate human thought, as it did in centuries past—a simple prompt can yield abundant computer-generated imagery in seconds.

While all the works in the exhibition were made using modern technology, a dichotomy emerged in the subject matter. Raqs's multifaceted research—drawn from contemporary art, speculative philosophy, and historical enquiry—delved into the complexities of consciousness, mythos, temporality, and language. Must the continual emergence of new technologies lead to the loss of artistic integrity and human expression? Raqs Media Collective—veterans of global showcases such as Documenta and the Venice and São Paulo biennales—suggested the contrary, offering a poignant meditation on what it means to be human in this collective moment. "Wayfaring Ways To Be" extended an invitation to reconsider what can set us apart from AI, both now and in the future.

ANNABEL PRESTON

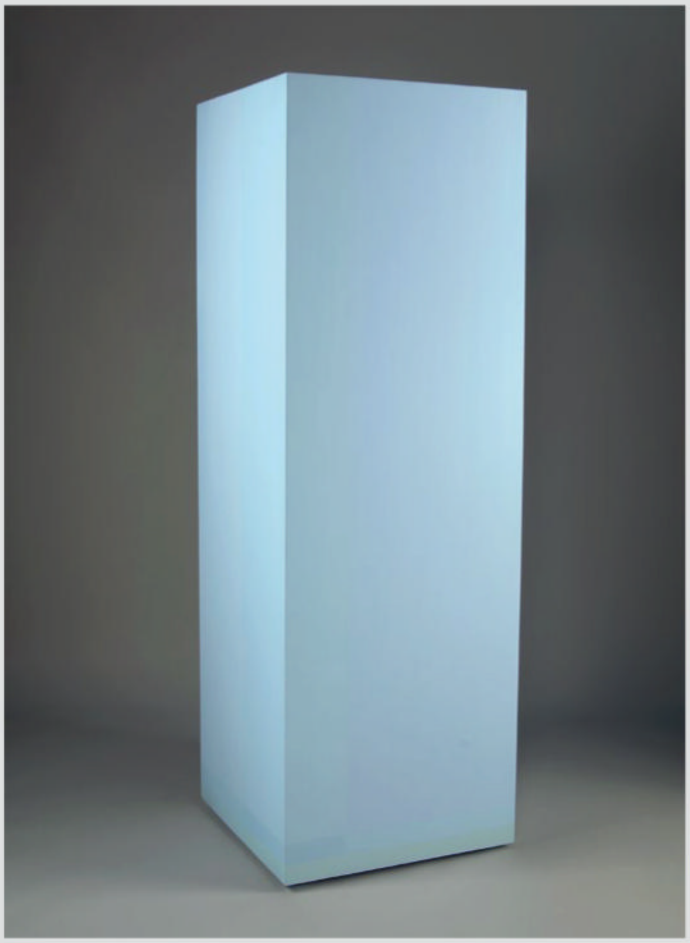
On Uncertainty and Anne Truitt

BY ALEX JEN



ANNE TRUITT

Portrait of **ANNE TRUITT** in her Twining Court studio standing by her sculpture *Tor*, Washington, DC, 1962. Courtesy the artist; Bridgeman Images, New York; and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.



ANNE TRUITT, *Landfall*, 1970, acrylic on wood, 186.4 × 60.7 × 61 cm. Courtesy the artist; Bridgeman Images, New York; and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

Each issue, ArtAsiaPacific *presents a critical essay in collaboration with Burger Collection, a Hong Kong nonprofit that partners with many institutions to support contemporary art worldwide.*

In the few photographs that exist of Anne Truitt in her studio, she is always wearing a placid, nearly inscrutable expression. She makes eye contact, but her mind is elsewhere. In 1962, perhaps she is thinking about *Tor*, the imposing poplar slab she has just bisected and layered with dark paint. In 1986, perhaps it is about the pale blue buoyancy of *Landfall* (1970), and how she will finish the two sculptures towering beside her.

Even in photographs, Truitt's forms captivate. This is due to her rigorous and intimate craftsmanship: after enlisting a cabinetmaker to make a structure to her exact specifications, she repeatedly painted and sanded the wood until completion—sometimes stripping off all the layers to start over again. For over 50 years she maintained this careful practice, making art until she passed away in 2004 at the age of 83.

Her formalism was deeply evocative, troubling the objectivity of critics and historians seeking to position her. Upon visiting her Twining Court studio in the heart of the District of Columbia in 1962, art critic Clement Greenberg proclaimed, "Now there will be three in Washington." He was offering her a place alongside Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland as the key Color Field painters in the city. Her 1963 debut at André Emmerich Gallery in New York is today cited as one of the earliest appearances of Minimalism. But these classifications are limiting.

More than material or form, color was Truitt's medium. She spoke precisely and almost mystically about varying tint, shade, and tone to achieve a particular monochrome—and by extension, a particular feeling or memory. Her titles, drawn from nature, literature, and geography, offer clues to her intentions, as do the journals she began keeping in 1974 at the age of 53. In *Daybook* (1982), *Turn* (1986), *Prospect* (1996), and posthumously, *Yield* (2022), she wrote about her childhood in Maryland; her wartime service as a nurse's aide; her marriage to James Truitt, a prominent journalist; motherhood; moving their family to follow his career; and her desires and frustrations in the studio. More than once, she referred to her sculptures as her companions: they stood around the studio, accumulative and watchful.

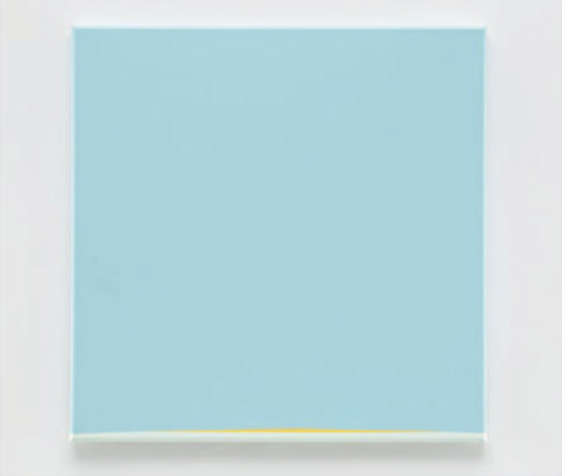
I looked at photos of Truitt and thought about writing this essay during a recent visit to Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. It was just a coincidence, I knew; nothing could connect Truitt with Cambodia. And yet, as I walked among the remaining jambs of the Bayon, whose sandstone inscriptions and flowered patterns have eroded into abstraction, I couldn't help but think of Truitt's columns. Staring up at the faces of the Buddhist king Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–1218 CE) that emerged on all four sides of every tower, I wondered how much they had seen. His almond-shaped eyes, broad nose, and upturned lips are benevolent, but his empire was not achieved peacefully. (After all, how many empires are?) There is history in these forms: the laborer's initial touch, the alterations made by later kings of different religious persuasions, and the looting and violence that occurred when the Khmer Rouge made the temple their base. I felt as if Truitt's sculpture must be similarly knowledgeable, having subsumed the details of her life and observed everything since. Indeed, she titled an early cerulean stacked sculpture *Summer Sentinel* (1963–72), and used the designation later in her career as well.

I felt small amid this history, and looking around Angkor that day at the piles of rubble that were once grand temples, I felt a numbing sadness about the state of war in our world. Powerful countries vie for hegemony—entitled to their national security, we are told. Meanwhile, the massacre of the innocents continues and the debris proliferate. Now as in the 1960s and '70s, my country, the United States, is often involved. Back in the tuk-tuk, I scrolled through the Wikipedia pages on Operation Menu and Operation Freedom Deal, the bombing of North Vietnamese military sanctuaries in Cambodia, in frustrated incredulity.

Through an admittedly arbitrary encounter with Angkor's great antiquity, I want to ruminate on the affective potential of Truitt's sculpture, and how we might look at her work in tragedy. Two of the artist's early epiphanies help make my case. The first was in 1950, when Truitt had a similarly jarring experience with ancient splendor, albeit in the completely different cultural context of Mexico. The second was in 1962; after encountering Barnett Newman's early zip painting *Onement VI* (1953) at the Guggenheim Museum the previous year, she created the strange, fence-like sculpture *First* (1961) and destroyed nearly all her early work. Shortly thereafter, she conceived her first column, *Lea* (1962–71).

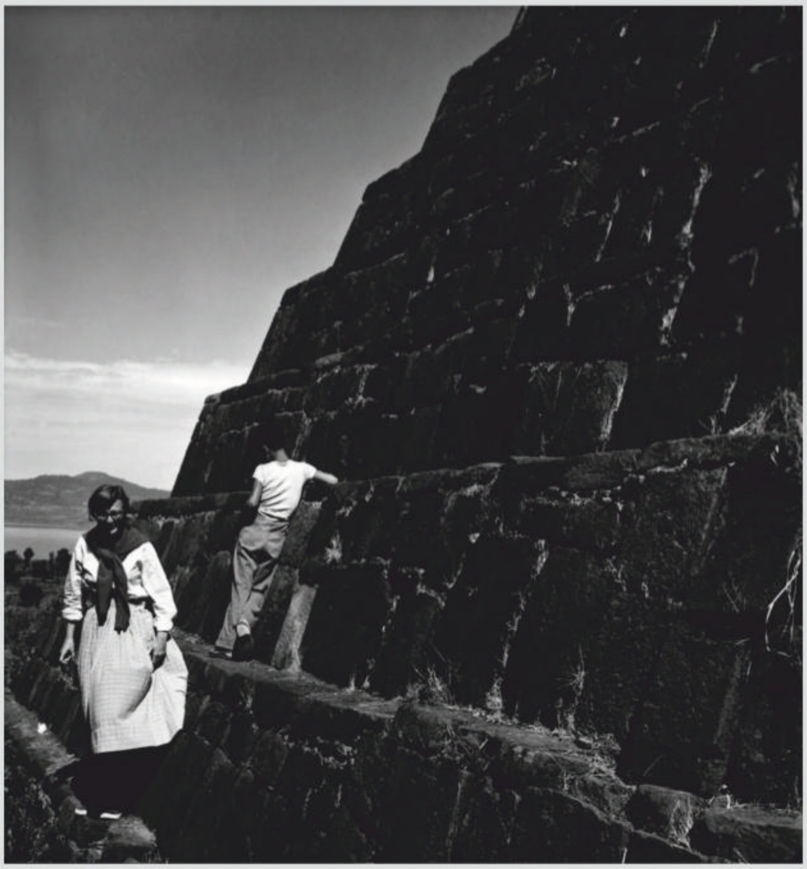
In a 1998 lecture, Truitt recalled: "I was standing in the sunshine of our living room one morning when it suddenly came to me perfectly clearly that a sculpture stood . . . on a line of gravity that disarmed time. Stood alone as a person stands alone, bathed in the light that marks the passage of time, not *subject* to time but *illuminated* by it." But can we really disarm time? Standing amid old ruins, thinking of recently broken ceasefires, I was a bit skeptical. These remnants of the past remind us that everything will be taken away, nothing is permanent, and yet we seem to ignore history, satisfying our human ambition—expansionism—by accelerating our mutual destruction.

Thinking about Truitt in Angkor instilled a deep uncertainty in me. I struggled to reconcile the freedom and timelessness of Truitt's forms with the concurrent destruction endorsed by US foreign policy during the Cold War. It is a lesser-known fact that



ANNE TRUITT, *Prospect*, 1991, acrylic on canvas, 122 × 122 cm. Courtesy the artist; Bridgeman Images, New York; and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

Detail of an *apsara* at the Northern entrance to the Bayon, Angkor Thom, Siem Reap. Photo by Alex Jen.

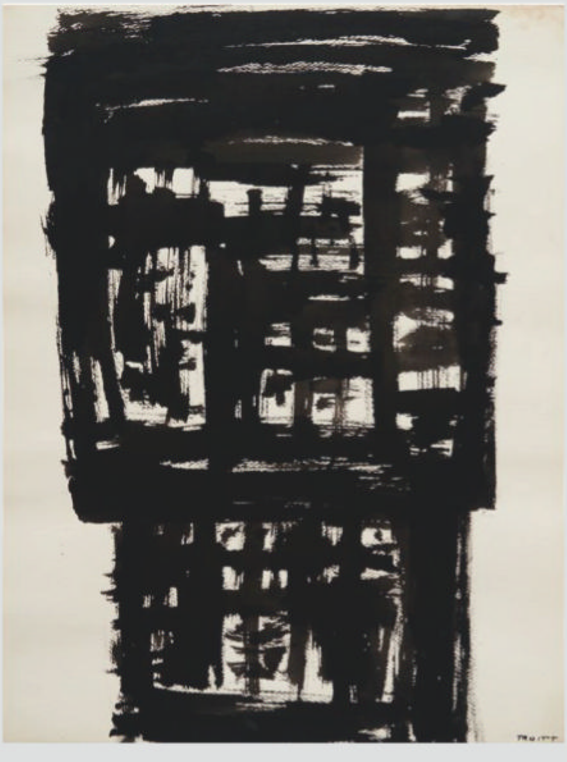


Portrait of **ANNE TRUITT** in Mexico, 1950. Courtesy the artist; Bridgeman Images, New York; and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

Truitt was among Washington's notables, counting as close friends the painter Mary Pinchot Meyer and poet Cicely Angleton, whose husbands, Cord Meyer and James Jesus Angleton, were senior CIA officials during the Vietnam War. But it would be irrational to indict Truitt or slide into conspiracy. I simply wish to view her formalism within another dimension, to refuse the purity of American "postwar" expression, and to ask how and why we look at abstraction amid continuing turmoil. I recognize the distance between everything I am trying to connect, but I am emboldened by Truitt's journals, in which she reminded us that how we perceive art is clearly affected by how we perceive, indeed how we love and lament, life.

In 1950, Truitt traveled with James to Mexico to visit several ancient sites: the Mesoamerican city of Teotihuacán (c. 100 BCE–800 CE); Tula, the capital of the Toltec Empire (c. 850–1150 CE); and the Mayan ruins at Tulum. She wrote of the "intense and instant terror" of the visit, struck by the pyramids' astrological function and their embodiment of "life and death, creation and destruction." These forms haunted her, arguably for the rest of her career. In the decade after her trip, Truitt learned to sculpt in a self-described "apprenticeship," seeking out elder artists wherever she moved the family: in Dallas she studied with Octavio Medellin for several months, and in New York she took classes in life drawing and wood carving from Peter Lipman-Wulf. Working with clay, wire, wood, and stone, Truitt made figurative and Cubist-inspired sculptures—women emerging out of raw material, "expressionistic, declamatory, rhetorical," as she herself reminisced in 1991. In function they recall the spore-ringed *apsaras* guarding the Bayon. Truitt worked figuratively in this vein for a few years, sculpting "gothic" busts and over-life-size figures.

ANNE TRUITT, *Ink Drawing '59 [10]*, 1959, ink on paper, 60 × 45 cm. Courtesy the artist; Burger Collection; Bridgeman Images, New York; and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.



By the late 1950s, her memories of Mesoamerica returned in full force. Using ink, she traced and retraced the ruins' block-like shapes on newsprint, her gestures lost in melded stains. *Ink Drawing '59 [10]* (1959) is a top-heavy mass comprised of latticed brushwork; except in a few splintering dashes, its black is solid, ominous. For her sculptures, Truitt used grogged clay to build up coarse, compact, and repetitive forms resembling temples. *Untitled* (1959) looks like a compressed ziggurat, heavily scored; another untitled work, made that year in clay bisque, is a lopsided, trapezoidal thing—perhaps a stair step?—incised across its faces with a broken line.

Truitt's early work displayed an intensity of feeling that becomes less evident as she tempered her gestures after 1961. But her mode of expression remained consistent. After seeing Newman's *Onement VI*, she wrote that "'Enough' was my radiant feeling—for once in my life enough space, enough color. It seemed to me that I had never before been free." This is an earnest, familiar reaction to Newman, though what she said next is concerning: "I staggered out into the street, intoxicated with freedom. . . . I was completely taken by surprise, the more so as I had only earlier that day been thinking how I felt like a plowed field, my children all born, my life laid out; I saw myself stretched like brown earth in furrows, open to the sky, well planted, my life as a human being complete." There is both satisfaction and loneliness in this statement. I am tempted to reconsider "freedom," both Truitt's newfound freedom and America's "gift of freedom" narrative which was used to justify its war against Communism in Southeast Asia. Is it not odd how the same word can be used to describe an experience of a Color Field painting, a break from the duties of motherhood, and the 2.8 million tons of bombs dropped on Cambodia between 1965 and 1973? How can liberation be as intense and violent as the thing one is being freed from?

My Cold War contextualization of Truitt is not new. Curator James Meyer poked fun at such readings in a 2002 interview with the artist. Responding to his suggestion that she socialized with members of the CIA, Truitt said: "I've always thought it was peculiar, too. I was floating around in that world. . . . I didn't pay attention to what was going on. And remember, much was secret. People were covert. . . . [M]y private feelings about it were that it was just very strange. I don't understand why fate led me to be in such a situation." Or as Jacqueline Kennedy's social secretary, Letitia Baldrige, said of being a political wife, "your husband would not talk to you." Can we then further understand Truitt's work as alienated, made in a repressed society?

Truitt moved forward by striving to make sculpture that was adamantly alive. Often she returned to nature, observing its seeming obliviousness amid human disorder. Between 1971 and 1975, she made four sculptures with identical dimensions: *Summer Dryad* (1971), *Winter Dryad* (1973), *Autumn Dryad* (1975) and *Spring Dryad* (1975). The first is bright green and bisected unevenly along the front—a blade of grass, flattened; the second, surprisingly (given its title), is dark and hard to read.

In a journal entry from February 26, 1975, Truitt began, "The newspaper this morning prominently displayed a photograph of a Cambodian man holding the naked, spraddled body of his just killed daughter." She went on to prepare breakfast for Sam, her youngest, and to give the dog a bone-shaped treat. Only a "logic of madness" can explain such disparity, Truitt wrote. But she does not expand, diverting instead to a memory of an industrious tailor she remembered from childhood. She herself struggled with the tragic image of that dead Cambodian child, and tried to find solace in the belief that everyone makes do with their given circumstances. But the entry ends unconvincingly. Later that year Truitt finished *Autumn Dryad*, a burnt orange elegy inspired by a fox hunt, and *Spring Dryad*, a rebloom in powder pink, crowned by a green band whose shade we see in *Summer Dryad*. We often talk about the gap between art and life, about how the world's turmoil and violence depress us; we also argue endlessly about whether art has any true social impact. Maybe it doesn't. I find this resignation in Truitt, and yet she offers us a possibility of looking and living under the political machinations that are outside our control. I do not want to say something so trite as "art can heal." Rather, Truitt's sculptures counter our world's disorder with an invitation to consider color first, then time and space.

Walking toward the Eastern gopura of Preah Khan, a temple built by Jayavarman VII in honor of his father, one first passes a processional entryway lined with stone posts. Each is carved with a mythical *Singha* in the lower section, and a roughly hewn alcove above that is curiously empty. It turns out the niches used to house seated Buddhas, all destroyed in a mass iconoclasm in the 13th century. Still, in the center of one alcove, I saw a leaf floating, suspended perfectly, perhaps hanging by a spider's web. And in the distance, a bodhi tree had grown into the temple, splitting the stone blocks and overtaking its monumental presence.

In the summer of 1991, upon retiring from teaching at the University of Maryland, Truitt wrote: "[O]n the whole this is not a society in which to grow old, or to be without resources. I feel myself a citizen in a heartless country. The United States has just 'won' a savage war in the Persian Gulf." She went on to describe the sheer technological might of "the machines with which we killed," proudly on display on the Washington Mall. She lamented the human intellect that was responsible for our advances in medicine, computers, and space exploration yet also invented this weaponry. Again, she offered no answers for this disjunction. But what I take from Truitt is that we still must observe, and critique, and understand that life does find a way to begin again. But rather than wait for the tree to grow through the ruins—which happens only after we've long gone—can we instead, with the attention she devoted to painting and sanding each sculpture, be grateful for what we've already been given? One hopes it will be "Enough."

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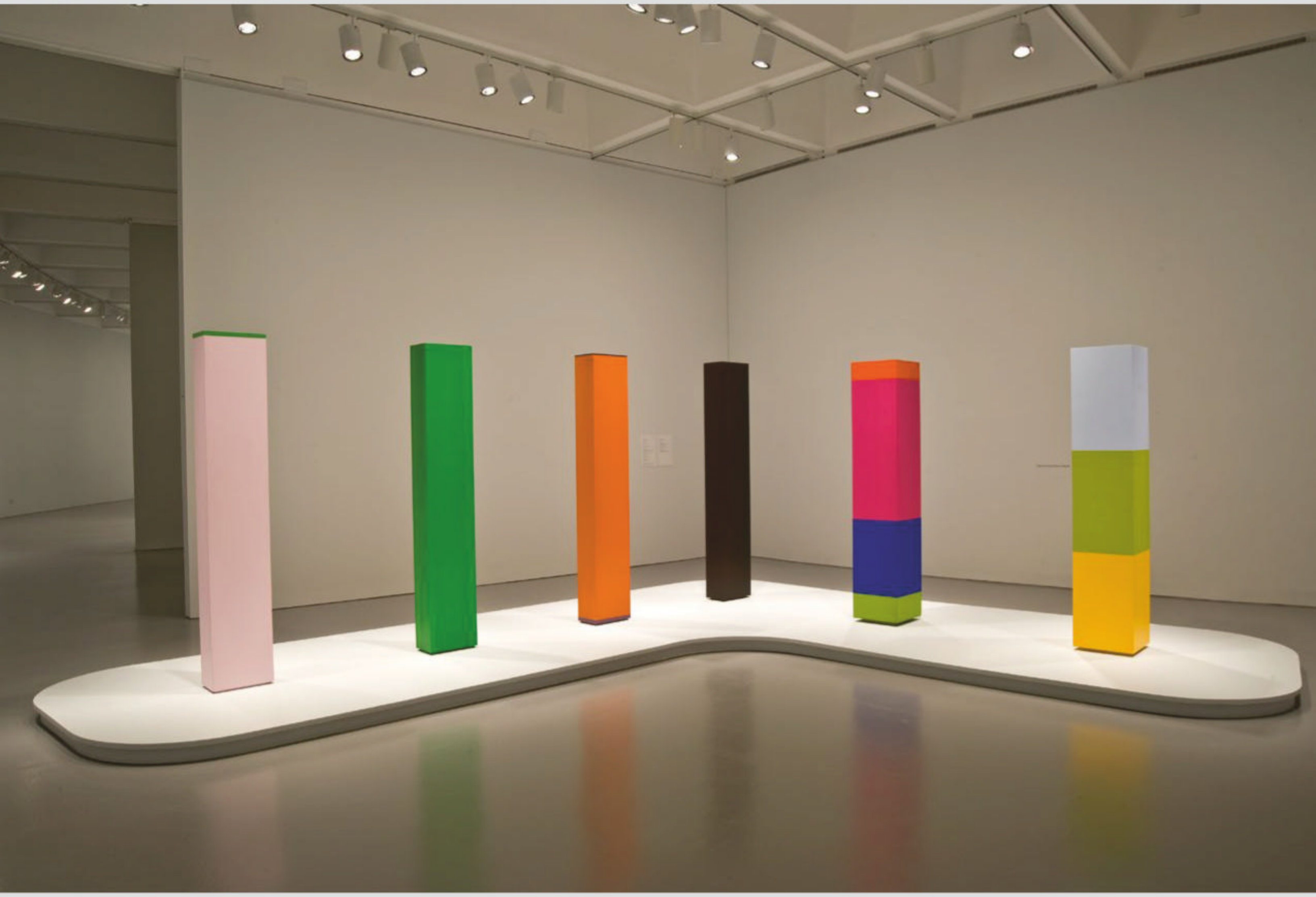
1 All in all, Truitt moved the family no fewer than eight times, including three-year stints in San Francisco (1957–60) and Tokyo (1964–67). In every place she took the time to study with local artists and further hone her craft. See Brenda Richardson, "Anne Truitt: A Tenth of a Second to Live," in *Anne Truitt Drawings* (New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 2012) for an in-depth consideration of Truitt's "apprenticeship."

2 See Manuel de Baca, "Chapter One: First (1961)," in *Memory Work: Anne Truitt and Sculpture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016) for an incisive critique of Truitt's progression to *First*.

Anne Truitt (1921–2004) was an American artist whose bold use of geometry and color, memory and feeling, signaled a new direction for modern sculpture. She was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and graduated from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania in 1943. During World War II, she worked in a Massachusetts hospital as a psychiatric lab assistant and nurse's aide. Thereafter, she then wrote fiction and studied at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Washington, DC. In the early 1960s, her geometric paintings and painted sculptures drew the attention of major critics. She went on to show with top-tier galleries and to have solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1973), the Corcoran Gallery of Art (1974), the Baltimore Museum of Art (1992), and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (2009). Truitt also received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She taught at the University of Maryland at College Park for 21 years and published a number of highly regarded books, including the trilogy *Daybook* (1982), *Turn* (1986), and *Prospect* (1996), all subtitled *The Journal of an Artist*.

Alex Jen is Assistant Curator, Prints & Drawings and Arts of Asia, The Art Institute of Chicago.

Installation view of “Anne Truitt: Perception and Reflection,” at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, 2009. Photo by Lee Stalsworth. Courtesy the artist; Bridgeman Images, New York; and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.



ART DIRECTORY

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A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO
THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS IN ASIA,
THE MIDDLE EAST, THE PACIFIC,
AND AROUND THE WORLD.

ABU DHABI

NYUAD ART GALLERY

www.nyuad-artgallery.org
nyuad.artgallery@nyu.edu
New York University Abu Dhabi,
Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi
T +971 2 628 8000
Tues–Sun 12pm–8pm

ANTWERP

AXEL VERVOORDT GALLERY

www.axel-vervoordt.com
info@axelvervoordtgallery.com
Kanaal Stokerijstraat 19, Wijnegem 2110
T +32 3 355 33 00
Sat 11am–6pm or by appointment

BANGKOK

100 TONSON FOUNDATION

www.100tonsonfoundation.org
hello@100tonsonfoundation.org
100 Soi Tonson, Ploenchit Road, Lumpini,
Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330
T +66 2010 5813
Thur–Fri 10am–6pm
Sat–Sun 11am–7pm

RICHARD KOH FINE ART

www.rkfineart.com
win@rkfineart.com
Peterson Building, 712/1 Sukhumvit Rd,
Khlong Tan, Khlong Toei, Bangkok 10110
T +66 95952 9427
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

RIVER CITY BANGKOK

www.rivercitybangkok.com
rcbexhibition@rivercity.co.th
23 Charoen Krung Soi 24
Talard Noi, Sampantawong
Bangkok 10100
T +66 2 237 0077
Mon–Sun 10am–8pm

TANG CONTEMPORARY ART

www.tangcontemporary.com
bkk@tanggallery.vip
Room 201-206, River City Bangkok,
23 Soi Charoenkrung 24, Talad Noi,
Sampantawong, Bangkok 10100
T +66 2000 1541
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm
Closed on Public Holidays

BEIJING

BEIJING COMMUNE

www.beijingcommune.com
info@beijingcommune.com
798 Art Zone, 4 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang District, Beijing 100015
T +86 10 8456 2862
Tues–Sat 10am–6pm

MAGICIAN SPACE

www.magician.space
info@magician-space.com
798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang District, Beijing 100015
T +86 10 5978 9635
Tues–Sat 10:30am–6:30pm

GALERIE URS MEILE

www.galerieursmeile.com
beijing@galerieursmeile.com
D10, 798 East Street, 798 Art District,
2 Jiuxianqiao Road, Chaoyang District,
Beijing 100015
T +86 10 576 260 51
Tues–Sun 11am–6:30pm

TANG CONTEMPORARY ART

www.tangcontemporary.com
info@tangcontemporary.com
B5, Yard No.3, Jinhang E.Rd.,
Shunyi District, Beijing
Tues–Sun 11am–5:30pm (Nov–Apr)
11am–6:30pm (May–Oct)

D06, 798 Art District, No.2 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang Dst, Beijing
T +86 10 5978 9610

B01, 798 Art District, No.2 Jiuxianqiao Road,
Chaoyang Dst, Beijing
T +86 10 5762 3060
Tues–Sun 11am–5:30pm (Nov–Apr)
11am–6:30pm (May–Oct)

BEIRUT

BEIRUT ART CENTER

www.beirutartcenter.org
info@beirutartcenter.org
Jisr el-Wati, Off Corniche An-Nahr,
Building SAFE, Street 93, Zone 66 Adlieh
T +961 (0) 1 397 018
Mon–Fri 12pm–7pm
Sat 12pm–5pm

BERLIN

A3 ARNDT ART AGENCY

www.arndt-art-agency.com
contact@arndtartagency.com
Rungestr. 6, 10179 Berlin
T +49 17610105697
Hours vary by project

ZILBERMAN | BERLIN

www.zilbermangallery.com
zilberman@zilbermangallery.com
Goethestraße 82, 10623 Berlin
T +49 30 3180 9900
Tues–Sat 11am–6pm

BRISBANE

INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART

www.ima.org.au
ima@ima.org.au
420 Brunswick Street, Brisbane, QLD 4006
T +61 732 525 750
Tues–Sat 10am–5pm

MILANI GALLERY

www.milanigallery.com.au
270 Montague Road, West End,
Brisbane, QLD 4101
T +61 7 3846 6046
Wed–Sat 11am–5pm

BUSAN

KUKJE GALLERY

www.kukjegallery.com
kukje@kukjegallery.com
F1963, 20 Gurak-ro, 123 Beon-gil,
Suyeong-gu, Busan 48212
T +82 51 758 2239
Tues–Sun 10am–6pm

CHICAGO

SMART MUSEUM OF ART

www.smartmuseum.uchicago.edu
smart-museum@uchicago.edu
5550 S Greenwood Ave, Chicago, IL 60637
T +1 773 702 0200
Tues–Sun 10am–5pm

DOHA

MATHAF: ARAB MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

www.mathaf.org.qa
Education City Student Center, Doha
T +974 4402 8830
Sat–Thurs 9am–7pm
Fri 1:30pm–7pm

DUBAI

ALSERKAL AVENUE

www.alserkal.online
info@alserkal.online
Al Quoz, Dubai
T +971 4 333 3464
Mon–Sun 10am–7pm

JAMEEL ARTS CENTRE

www.jameelartscentre.org
hello@jameelartscentre.org
Jaddaf Waterfront, Dubai
T +971 4 8739 800
Fri 12pm–8pm
Sat–Thur 10am–8pm

PERROTIN

www.perrotin.com
dubai@perrotin.com
DIFC, Gate Village, Building 5,
Unit 1, Podium Level
T +971 4 565 5068
Mon–Fri 10am–1am
Sat–Sun 3pm–1am

JAKARTA

ROH PROJECTS

www.rohprojects.net
info@rohprojects.net
Jalan Surabaya 66, Jakarta 10310
T +62 81 1871 9066

HONG KONG SAR

10 CHANCERY LANE

www.10chancerylanegallery.com
info@10chancerylanegallery.com
G/F, 10 Chancery Lane, Central
T +852 2810 0065
Mon–Fri 9am–6pm
Sat 12pm–5pm

ALISAN FINE ARTS

www.alisan.com.hk
info@alisan.com.hk
21/F Lyndhurst Tower,
1 Lyndhurst Terrace, Central
T +825 2526 1091
Mon–Sat 10am–6pm

BLINDSPOT GALLERY

www.blindspotgallery.com
info@blindspotgallery.com
15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang
T +852 2517 6238
Tues–Sat 10:30am–6:30pm

CHAT (CENTRE FOR HERITAGE, ARTS AND TEXTILE)

www.mill6chat.org
enquiry@mill6chat.org
The Mills, 45 Pak Tin Par Street, Tsuen Wan
T +852 3979 2301
Mon, Wed–Sun 11am–7pm

CHRISTIE'S

www.christies.com
infoasia@christies.com
6/F, The Henderson, 2 Murray Road, Central
T +852 2760 1766
Mon–Fri 9:30am–6pm

MASSIMO DE CARLO

www.massimodecarlo.com
hongkong@massimodecarlo.com
Shop 03-205A, 205B, and 206, 2/F,
Barrack Block, Tai Kwun,
No. 10 Hollywood Road, Central
T +852 2613 8062
Mon–Sat 10:30am–7pm

CURRENT PLANS

www.current-plans.com
hkinfo@hollysinternational.com
2F Tak On House, 13 Wong Chuk St.,
Sham Shui Po
Open by appointment

DE SARTHE

www.desarthe.com
hongkong@desarthe.com
26/F, M Place, 54 Wong Chuk Hang Road,
Wong Chuk Hang
T +852 2167 8896
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

EMPTY GALLERY

www.emptygallery.com
contact@emptygallery.com
18–19/F Grand Marine Centre,
3 Yue Fung Street, Tin Wan
T +852 2563 3396
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

HANART TZ GALLERY

www.hanart.com
hanart@hanart.com
2/F Mai On Ind. Bldg.,
19 Kung Yip St., Kwai Chung
T +852 2526 9019
Mon–Fri 10am–6:30pm
Sat 10am–6pm

HAUSER & WIRTH

www.hauserwirth.com
hongkong@hauserwirth.com
G/F, 8 Queen's Road Central, Central
T +852 3958 7188
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

HONG KONG ARTS CENTRE

www.hkac.org.hk
hkac@hkac.org.hk
2 Harbour Road, Wan Chai
T +852 2582 0200
Mon–Sun 8am–11pm

KIANG MALINGUE

www.kiangmalingue.com
office@kiangmalingue.com
Wan Chai location: 10 Sik On Street
Aberdeen location: 13/F, Blue Box Factory Building, 25 Hing Wo Street
T +852 2810 0317
Tues–Sat 10am–7pm

LGDR & WEI

www.lgdr.com
info@lgdr.com
G/F, 2 Ice House Street, Central
T +852 2613 9568
Mon–Fri 11am–7pm

M+

www.mplus.org.hk
38 Museum Drive, West Kowloon
T +852 2200 0217
Tues–Thur, Sat–Sun 10am–6pm
Fri 10am–10pm

OPERA GALLERY

www.operagallery.com
hkg@operagallery.com
Unit 01, 11/F, 1 Duddell Street, Central
T +852 2810 1208
Mon–Fri 10am–6pm

PACE GALLERY

www.pacegallery.com
hongkong@pacegallery.com
12/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central,
Central
T +852 2608 5065
Tues–Sat 11am–6pm

PARA SITE

www.para-site.art
info@para-site.art
22/F, Wing Wah Industrial Building,
677 King's Road, Quarry Bay
T +852 2517 4620
Wed–Sun 12pm–7pm

PERROTIN

www.perrotin.com
hongkong@perrotin.com
8/F, K11 Atelier Victoria Dockside,
18 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui
T +852 3758 2180
Tue–Sat 11am–7pm

ROSSI & ROSSI

www.rossirossi.com
info@rossirossi.com
11/F, M Place, 54 Wong Chuk Hang Road,
Wong Chuk Hang
T +852 2116 5282
Tues–Sat 11am–6pm

SOLUNA FINE ART

www.solunafineart.com
contact@solunafineart.com
G/F, 52 Sai Street, Sheung Wan
T +852 2955 5166
Tues–Sat 10am–6pm

SOTHEBY'S

www.sothebys.com
5/F, One Pacific Place, 88 Queensway, Admiralty
T +852 2524 8121

SUN MUSEUM

www.sunmuseum.org.hk
office@sunmuseum.org.hk
4/F, SML Tower, 165 Hoi Bun Road, Kwun Tong
T +852 2690 6790
Tues–Sat 10am–6pm

TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY

www.taikwun.hk
10 Hollywood Road, Central
T +852 3559 2600
Tues–Sun 11am–7pm

TANG CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRAL SPACE

www.tangcontemporary.com
info@tangcontemporary.com.hk
10/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central,
Central
T +852 2682 8289
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm
Closed on Public Holidays

TANG CONTEMPORARY ART WONG CHUK HANG SPACE

www.tangcontemporary.com
info@tangartfoundation.org
20/F, Landmark South, 39 Yip Kan Street,
Wong Chuk Hang
T +852 3703 9245
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm
Closed on Public Holidays

AXEL VERVOORDT GALLERY

www.axel-vervoordt.com
info@axelvervoordtgallery.com.hk
21/F, Coda Designer Centre, 62 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang
T +852 2503 2331
Thur–Sat 11am–7pm

WHITESTONE GALLERY

www.whitestone-gallery.com
info@whitestone-gallery.com
7–8/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central
T +852 2523 8001
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

DAVID ZWIRNER

www.davidzwirner.com
hongkong@davidzwirner.com
5–6/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central
T +852 2119 5900
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

ISTANBUL

ZILBERMAN | ISTANBUL

www.zilbermangallery.art
zilberman@zilbermangallery.com
İstiklal Cad. No.163 Mısır Apartmanı
K.2&3 D.5&10, Beyoğlu, Istanbul
T +90 212 251 12 14
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

KUALA LUMPUR

ILHAM GALLERY

www.ilhamgallery.com
info@ilhamgallery.com
3 & 5/F, Ilham Tower, 8 Jalan Binjai,
50450 Kuala Lumpur
T +60 3 2181 3003
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm
Sun 11am–5pm

RICHARD KOH FINE ART

www.rkfineart.com
info@rkfineart.com
229 Jalan Maarof, Bukit Bandaraya,
Bangsar, 59000 Kuala Lumpur
T +60 3 2095 3300 / +60 16 491 2644
Open by appointment only

LONDON

DAVID ZWIRNER

www.davidzwirner.com
london@davidzwirner.com
24 Grafton Street, London W1S 4EZ
T +44 203 538 3165
Tues–Sat 10am–6pm

MANILA

ATENEO ART GALLERY

www.ateneoartgallery.com
aag@ateneo.edu
Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Avenue,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Metro Manila 1108
T +63 2 8426 6001
Mon–Sat 9am–5pm

THE DRAWING ROOM

www.drawingroomgallery.com
info@drawingroomgallery.com
G/F, C Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Chino Roces
Avenue, Makati City, Metro Manila 1231
T +63 2 801 4397 / +63 2 801 4398
Tues–Sat 11am–5pm, by appointment only

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND DESIGN (MCAD)

www.mcadmanila.org.ph
mcad@benilde.edu.ph
G/F, De La Salle - College of Saint Benilde School of Design and Arts Campus, Dominga St., Malate, Metro Manila 1004
T +63 2 8230 5100
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm
Sun 10pm-2pm

SILVERLENS

www.silverlensgalleries.com
inquiry@silverlensgalleries.com
2263 Don Chino Roces Avenue Ext.,
Makati City, Philippines 1231
T +63 2 816 0044
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

MELBOURNE

ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY

www.annaschwartzgallery.com
mail@annaschwartzgallery.com
185 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000
T +61 3 9654 6131
Tues-Fri 12pm-5pm

MILAN

MASSIMO DE CARLO

www.massimodecarlo.com
milano@massimodecarlo.com
Viale Lombardia 17, Milano 20131
T +39 02 7000 3987
Tues-Sat 11am-6:30pm

PRIMO MARELLA GALLERY

www.primomarellagallery.com
info@primomarellagallery.com
Via Valtellina 66 (at Viale Stelvio), Milano 20159
T +39 02 8738 4885

MUMBAI

JHAVERI CONTEMPORARY

www.jhavericontemporary.com
info@jhavericontemporary.com
3/F, Devidas Mansion, 4 Mereweather Road,
Apollo Bandar Colaba, Mumbai 400 001
T +91 22 2202 1051
Tues-Sat 11am-6:30pm

SAKSHI GALLERY

www.sakshigallery.com
enquiry@sakshigallery.com
8/9, Sanghvi House, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba,
Mumbai 400 005. Maharashtra.
T +91 22 2282 3025
+91 98843 34813
Mon-Sat 11am-6pm
Closed on public holidays

NEW DELHI

NATURE MORTE

www.naturemorte.com
info@naturemorte.com
The Dhan Mill, 287, 288, 100 Feet Rd,
Chhatarpur Hills, New Delhi 110074
Tues-Sun 11am-7pm

7 Poorvi Marg, Block A, Vasant Vihar,
New Delhi 110057
T +91 11 4068 7117
Mon-Sat 10am-6pm

TALWAR GALLERY

www.talwargallery.com
nd@talwargallery.com
C-84 Neeti Bagh, New Delhi 110049
T +91 11 4605 0307
Mon-Sat 11am-7pm

NEW YORK

ALISAN NEW YORK

www.alisan.com.hk
info@alisan.nyc
120 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10065
T +1 646 360 3439
Mon-Fri 10am-6pm
(Sat by appointment)

CHRISTIE'S

www.christies.com
20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020
T +1 212 636 2000
Mon-Fri 10am-5pm

PACE GALLERY

www.pacegallery.com
info@pacegallery.com
540 West 25th Street and 510 West 25th Street,
New York, NY 10001
T +1 212 421 3292
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

PERROTIN

www.perrotin.com
newyork@perrotin.com
130 Orchard Street,
New York, NY 10002
T +1 212 812 2902
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

SILVERLENS

www.silverlensgalleries.com
infoNY@silverlensgalleries.com
505 West 24th Street,
New York, NY 10011
T +1 646 449 9400
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

DAVID ZWIRNER

www.davidzwirner.com
newyork@davidzwirner.com
525 West 19th Street, New York 10011
537 West 20th Street, New York 10011
34 East 69th Street, New York 10021
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

52 Walker Street, New York 10013
Tues-Wed, Fri-Sat 10am-6pm
Thur 12pm-8pm

PARIS

PERROTIN

www.perrotin.com
paris@perrotin.com
76 Rue de Turenne, 75003 Paris
10 Impasse Saint Claude, 75003 Paris
2bis Av. Matignon, 75008 Paris
8 Av. Matignon, 75008 Paris
T +33 1 4216 7979
Tues-Sat 11am-7pm

SEOUL

ARARIO GALLERY SEOUL

www.arariogallery.com
85 Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03058
T +82 2 541 5701
Tues-Sat 11am-6pm

DOOSAN ART CENTER

www.doosanartcenter.com
doosangallery.seoul@doosan.com
15 Jong-ro 33-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
T +82 2 708 5050
Tues-Sat 11am-7pm

GALLERY HYUNDAI

www.galleryhyundai.com
mail@galleryhyundai.com
8 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul 03062
T +82 2 2287 3591
Tues-Sun 10am-6pm

KUKJE GALLERY

www.kukjegallery.com
kukje@kukjegallery.com
54 Samchong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul
T +82 2 735 8449
Mon-Sat 10am-6pm
Sun 10am-5pm

LEHMANN MAUPIN

www.lehmannmaupin.com
seoul@lehmannmaupin.com
213 Itaewon-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul
T +82 2 725 0094
Tues-Sat 11am-7pm

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART, KOREA

www.mmca.go.kr
mmca@korea.kr
30 Samcheong-ro, Jogno-gu, Seoul 03062
T +82 2 3701 9500
Mon-Tues, Thur-Fri, Sun 10am-6pm
Wed, Sat 10am-9pm

ONE AND J. GALLERY

www.oneandj.com
info@oneandj.com
31-14 Bukchon-Ro, Jongro-Gu, Seoul 03055
T +82 2 745 1644
Tues-Sun 11am-6pm

PACE GALLERY

www.pacegallery.com
seoul@pacegallery.com
262 Itaewon-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul
T +82 2 790 9388
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

PERROTIN

www.perrotin.com
seoul@perrotin.com
1/F, 5 Palpan-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

10 Dosan-daero 45-gil, Gangnam-gu, Seoul
Tues-Sun 10am-6pm

THADDAEUS ROPAC

www.ropac.net
seoul@ropac.net
2F, 122-1 Dokseodang-ro
Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, Seoul 04420
T +82 2 6949 1760
Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

TANG CONTEMPORARY ART

www.tangcontemporary.com
info@tangcontemporary.co.kr
B2, 6, Apgujeong-ro 75-gil, Gangnam-gu
Seoul 06011
T +82 2 3445 8889
Tues-Sat 11am-7pm

SINGAPORE

FOST GALLERY

www.fostgallery.com
info@fostgallery.com
1 Lock Road
#01-02, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108932
T +65 6694 3080
Tuea-Sat 11am-7pm

RICHARD KOH FINE ART

www.rkfineart.com
info@rkfineart.com
Blk 47 Malan Road, #01-26, Gillman Barracks,
Singapore 109444
T +65 6513 2640
Tues-Sat 11am-7pm

MIZUMA GALLERY

www.mizuma.sg
info@mizuma.sg
22 Lock Road, #01-34, Gillman Barracks,
Singapore 108939
T +65 6570 2505
Tues-Sat 11am-7pm
Sun 11am-6pm

NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

www.nationalgallery.sg
info@nationalgallery.sg
St. Andrew's Road, #01-01, Singapore 178957
T +65 6271 7000
Mon–Sun 10am–7pm

OTA FINE ARTS

www.otafinearts.com
sg@otafinearts.com
7 Lock Road, #02-13 Gillman Barracks,
Singapore 108935
T +65 6694 3071
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

www.singaporeartmuseum.sg
enquiries@singaporeartmuseum.sg
39 Keppel Rd, #01-02, Tanjong Pagar Distripark,
Singapore 089065
T +65 6697 9730
Mon–Sun 10am–7pm

STPI CREATIVE WORKSHOP & GALLERY

www.stpi.com.sg
stpi@stpi.com.sg
41 Robertson Quay, Singapore 238236
T +65 6336 3663
Mon–Sat 10am–7pm
Sun 11am–5pm

SHANGHAI

ARARIO GALLERY SHANGHAI

www.arariogallery.com
info@ararioshanghai.com
1F, Building D, Mango Plaza, 7 Longai Road,
Xuhui District, Shanghai 200232
T +86 21 5424 9220
Tues–Sun 10am–7pm

OTA FINE ARTS

www.otafinearts.com/sh
sh@otafinearts.com
The gallery is relocating.
Contact the gallery for details.
T +86 21 3368 1321

PERROTIN

www.perrotin.com
shanghai@perrotin.com
3/F, 27 Huqiu Road,
Huangpu District, Shanghai 200002
T +86 21 6321 1234
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm

SHANGHART

www.shanghartgallery.com
info@shanghartgallery.com
West Bund, Bldg.10, 2555 Longteng Avenue,
Xuhui District, Shanghai 200232
T +86 21 6359 3923, +86 21 5424 9033
Tues–Sun 11am–6pm
Mon–Fri 10am–6pm

SHARJAH

SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

www.sharjahart.org
info@sharjahart.org
Sharjah Art Museum, Al Shuwaiheen Arts Area
T +971 6 568 5050
Sat–Thur 9am–9pm
Fri 4pm–9pm

SYDNEY

4A CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

www.4a.com.au
hello@4a.com.au
181–187 Hay Street, Haymarket, NSW 2000
T +61 2 9212 0380
Tues–Wed, Fri–Sun 11am–5pm
Thur 11am–8pm

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AUSTRALIA TALLAWOLADAH, GADIGAL COUNTRY

www.mca.com.au
reception@mca.com.au
140 George Street, The Rocks,
Sydney, NSW 1223
T +61 2 9245 2400
Tues–Thur 10am–5pm
Fri 10am–9pm
Sat–Sun 10am–5pm

ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY

www.roslynoxley9.com.au
oxley9@roslynoxley9.com.au
8 Soudan Lane, Paddington, NSW 2021
T +61 2 9331 1919
Tues–Fri 10am–6pm
Sat 11am–6pm

SULLIVAN+STRUMPF

www.sullivanstrumpf.com
art@sullivanstrumpf.com
799 Elizabeth Street, Zetland, NSW 2017
T +61 2 9698 4696
Tues–Sat 10am–5pm

YAVUZ GALLERY

www.yavuzgallery.com
info@yavuzgallery.com
69 Reservoir Street, NSW 2010
T +61 2 8040 8838
Tues–Sat 10am–6pm

TAIPEI

CHI-WEN GALLERY

www.chiwengallery.com
info@chi-wen.com
1/F, No. 32, Lane 2, Zhongshan North Road,
Sec. 6, Shilin District, Taipei 11155
T +886 2 2837 0237
Tues–Sat 1pm–6pm

DOUBLE SQUARE GALLERY

www.doublesquare.com.tw
info@doublesquare.com.tw
No.28, Lane 770, Beian Road, Zhongshan
District, Taipei 104
T +886 2 8501 2138
Tues–Sat 11am–6pm

MIND SET ART CENTER

www.art-msac.com
info@art-msac.com
1F, No. 20, Wenhu Street, Neihu District,
Taipei 114
T +886 2 2365 6008
Tues–Sat 1pm–6pm

PROJECT FULFILL ART SPACE

www.projectfulfill.com
info@projectfulfill.com
1/F, No. 2, Alley 45, Lane 147, Sec. 3,
Xinyi Road, Taipei 10658
T +886 2 2707 6942
Tues–Sat 11am–7pm
Sun by appointment only

TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM

www.tfam.museum
info-tfam@mail.taipei.gov.tw
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ITINERARY

HIGHLIGHTS AT MAJOR MUSEUMS, ART CENTERS, AND FESTIVALS FOR MAY–JUN 2025.

ONGOING

FEB 13–JUN 8
MACHINE LOVE: Video Game, AI and Contemporary Art
Mori Art Museum
Tokyo

FEB 15–MAY 4
Hawai'i Triennial 2025: Aloha Nō
Multiple locations
Honolulu

FEB 18–MAY 18
Tarek Atoui: ***At-Tāriq. A Journey into the Rural Music Traditions of North Africa and the Arab World***
Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza
Madrid

FEB 27–JUL 6
Pierre Huyghe: ***Liminal***
Leeum Museum of Art
Seoul

FEB 28–JUL 20
Ayoung Kim: ***Many Worlds Over***
Hamburger Bahnhof
Berlin

MAR 20–JUN 1
Htien Lin: ***Escape***
Ikon Gallery
Birmingham

MAR 27–JUL 27
Yukinori Yanagi: ***ICARUS***
Pirelli HangarBicocca
Milan

APR 2–MAY 24
Tromarama: ***Ping Inside Noisy Giraffe***
SongEun Art Space
Seoul

APR 2–AUG 17
City of Others: Asian Artists in Paris, 1920s–1940s
National Gallery Singapore
Singapore

APR 5–SEP 2
Ruth Asawa: ***Retrospective***
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
San Francisco

UPCOMING

MAY 1–OCT 19
Do Ho Suh: ***The Genesis Exhibition: Walk the House***
Tate Modern
London

MAY 7–JAN 18, 2026
Yayoi Kusama: ***Return to Infinity***
Dallas Museum of Art
Dallas

MAY 9–JUL 20
Clear, Lucid, and Awake. Artists on the Positive Transformation of the World
Art Sonje Center
Seoul

MAY 10–JUN 29
Yu Shuk Pui Bobby: ***The Piles We Carry***
Unge Kunstneres Samfund
Oslo

MAY 10–AUG 17
Heman Chong: ***This is a dynamic list and may never be able to satisfy particular standards for completeness***
Singapore Art Museum
Singapore

MAY 10–AUG 24
Lap-See Lam with Kholod Hawash: ***Fish Man, Fish Man***
Moderna Museet
Stockholm

MAY 10–SEP 28
Carl Cheng: ***Nature Never Loses***
Bonnefanten
Maastricht

MAY 16–AUG 10
Dalla Nasser: ***Xiloma. MCCCLXXXVI***
Kunsthalle Basel
Basel

MAY 17–SEP 7
Liao Fei
UCCA
Beijing

MAY 17–MAR 16, 2026
Direct Bodily Empathy – Sensing Sound
Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/
Len Lye Centre
New Plymouth

MAY 22–JUN 8
Barsakelmes
Tselinny Center of Contemporary Culture
Almaty

MAY 23–AUG 17
On Kawara: ***Rules of Freedom, Freedom of Rules***
Tai Kwun Contemporary
Hong Kong

MAY 24–OCT 5
Kei Imazu: ***The Sea is Barely Wrinkled***
Museum MACAN
Jakarta

MAY 28–OCT 26
Isamu Noguchi in the Rijksmuseum Gardens
Rijksmuseum
Amsterdam

MAY 31–AUG 31
Olafur Eliasson: ***Your curious journey***
Taipei Fine Arts Museum
Taipei

JUN 3–AUG 17
Wael Shawky & Akram Zaatari: ***MMCA Collection – Otherlands II***
National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea
Gwacheon

JUN 6–AUG 3
Man&Wah: ***Propagate/Germinate/Bloom***
4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
Sydney

JUN 6–OCT 19
Cerith Wyn Evans
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia
Sydney

JUN 7–JAN 12, 2026
Mounira Al Solh: ***A land as big as her skin***
Bonnefanten
Maastricht

JUN 14–JUL 27
Accumulation – On Collecting, Growth and Excess, Second Sequence
Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst
Zurich

JUN 21–OCT 6
Yolŋu power: the art of Yirrkala
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Sydney

JUN 24–SEP 21
Echoes Unveiled: Art by First Nations Women from Australia
Artizon Museum
Tokyo

JUN 25–SEP 7
Seulgi Lee
Ikon Gallery
Birmingham

JUN 28–OCT 5
Canton Modern: Art and Visual Culture, 1900s-1970s
M+
Hong Kong

JUN 29–MAR 1, 2026
MOCA Focus: Takako Yamaguchi
Museum of Contemporary Art
Los Angeles

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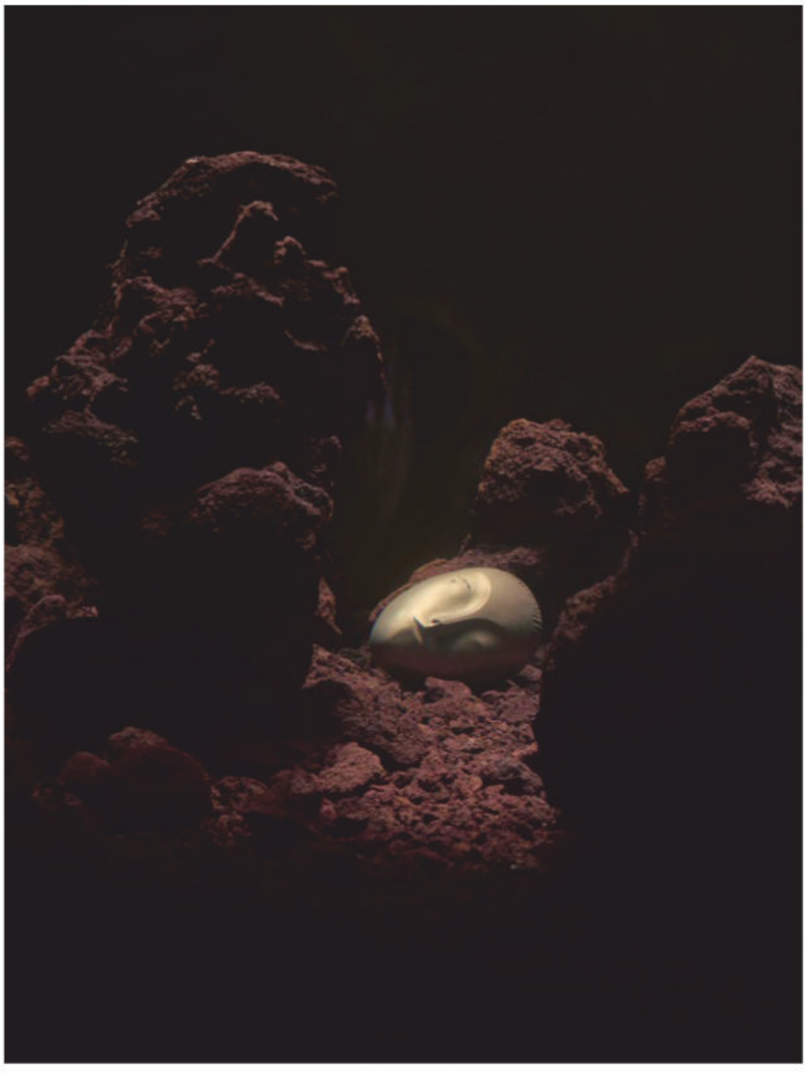
Pierre Huyghe *Liminal*

Leeum Museum of Art



Installation view of **PIERRE HUYGHE**'s *Zoodram 4*, 2011, aquarium, arrow crabs, hermit crab, resin shell after Constantin Brâncuși's *Sleeping Muse*, 1910, dimensions variable. Photo by LESS. Courtesy the Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul.

French multimedia artist Pierre Huyghe has teased Western art audiences for decades, repeatedly probing the nature of reality via puzzling environments and enigmatic hybrid artworks such as *Untilled (Liegender Frauenakt)* (2012), a reclining concrete female nude with an active beehive for a head. "Liminal," which presented 12 works at the Leeum Museum of Art in Seoul, was his first solo exhibition in Asia. Spanning 2013–24, the selection originally appeared at the 60th Venice Biennale last year in an official collateral show, co-developed by the Pinault Collection and the Leeum Museum. At the Punta della Dogana, as in Korea, the artist's preoccupation with the interface between the human and nonhuman prompted many questions, though not always the ones he intended.

Like Genesis, this survey—conceived by Huyghe in collaboration with independent curator Anne Stenne—began in darkness. Emerging first from the void, *Zoodram 4* (2011) is an illuminated aquarium containing a hermit crab living inside a hollow replica of Constantin Brâncuși's bronze sculpture *Sleeping Muse* (1910), the pair emblematic of Huyghe's obsession with human artifice vis-à-vis the natural world.

Nearby, a looming film projection, *Human Mask* (2014), offered a more troubling scenario. We see the streets and buildings of an abandoned Japanese town, then the interior of a restaurant where a seemingly mutant creature (a simian body decked out with a black dress, long black hair, and a smoothly impassive human face not unlike that of Brâncuși's muse) alternately bashes about the kitchen or waits silently by a window—for what, neither she nor her viewers can say. Only by consulting the annotated exhibition map do we learn that the setting is Fukushima after the 2011 nuclear accident. Ah yes, monstrous mutation has been a standard trope for the atomic threat ever since Godzilla rose from the sea in 1954. Huyghe's contribution was to put an alluring *onnamen* ("female mask") on a monkey.

The issue of what viewers know about a particular piece, and how they know it, pervaded the exhibition. Does *reading* about a work count as an art experience? Conceptual artists would say sure; visual purists are not convinced. But apparently, given Huyghe's long-term success at winning awards (the Hugo Boss Prize and many others), the art world's gatekeepers enjoy this sort of baffling experience and the research it prompts.

The floor piece *Estelarium* (2024), a slab of rock with a reverse-dome indentation, was described as cast from the belly of a woman in full-term pregnancy. *Offspring* (2018), which looks like the output of a fog machine rendered portentous by a grid of pin lights, might remind visitors of the mystic 14th-century religious text *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which advocates misty faith over the clarity of reason: "We cannot think our way to God." Huyghe's piece, however, is endowed with ongoing shifts in sound, scent, and lighting not by a supreme deity but by ever-vigilant AI.

Most deceptive of all is the eponymous *Liminal* (2024–). We may think we are watching a large-screen film in which a nude woman with a blacked-out face by turns lies still, thrashes, stands, and wanders on a moonlit shore. But the handout describes a "real-time simulation" that self-modifies in response to environmental stimuli picked up by sensors. Given that this is also what sensate creatures do, this technological work evokes a hazy border between human and animal, animal and machine: in short, the exhibition's theme.

The more illuminated second half of the show—the sections were on separate floors at the Leeum—included two vivid embodiments of ontological blur. *Mind's Eye (S)* (2022) is a thigh-high, multicolored glob of "synthetic and biological material." Its configuration was derived from the show's *UUmwelt – Annlee* (2018–), an ever-changing composite image of facial features, supposedly generated by the brainwaves of people trying to visualize the fantasy figure Annlee. (*Umwelt* is German for an organism's experience of its own environment.)

Huyghe, one of the founders of relational aesthetics, with its emphasis on socially inflected "encounters" rather than the

PIERRE HUYGHE, *Human Mask*, 2014, still image of film, color, sound: 19 min. Courtesy the Pinault Collection and Anne Lena Films.

solitary contemplation of art objects, is clearly operating on the now roughly 175-year-old principle of the avant-garde. Subject *les bourgeois* to one dose of strangeness after another until a few of them get shocked into a new vision, a new mode of being. Huyghe's signature method, immersive installation, undoubtedly owes much to his training at the National School of Decorative Arts in Paris, but his sensibility is also cinematic. His projects, replete with bizarre scene-setting and transmogrified characters, call to mind films like *The Island of Lost Souls* (1932), *Planet of the Apes* (1968), and *Jurassic Park* (1993)—all of them heirs of *Frankenstein* (1931). Indeed, at moments, "Liminal" almost attained the sublime weirdness of *Eraserhead* (1977).

But was it all a huge put-on? Eight years ago at the Punta della Dogana, Damien Hirst staged "Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable," a winking, over-the-top display of fake classical artifacts and artworks, allegedly dredged up from an ancient shipwreck. By comparison, Huyghe's cabinet of wonders seemed more earnest, but how could viewers really know that all the verbiage about sensors, exotic organisms, and AI was not an elaborate joke? And if the AI-directed editing of an artwork is no different from what a human might do, what is the point? Is it simply that artists are just as much at risk of being displaced by machine learning as insurance claims clerks?

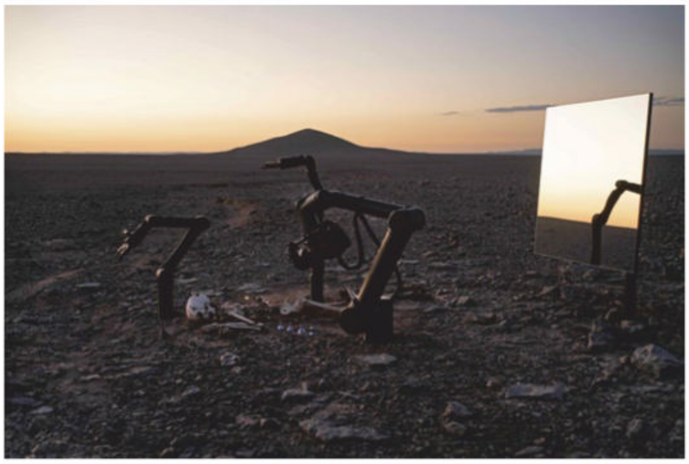
Adding to this festival of uncertainty were yet more fish tanks. One, titled *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo)* (2017), samples two different fish species—one sighted, we are told, the other blind—occasionally subjected to a blackening of the aquarium's glass, which disrupts the circadian rhythms of the seeing specimens, while leaving the others benighted but unfazed. The other tank, *Cambrian Explosion 19* (2013), hosts small aquatic lifeforms that apparently originated 540 million years ago—all hovered over by a "floating rock" (though a more scatological reference might come to mind), a format reminiscent of Jeff Koons's basketballs and Hirst's deathless shark. Several performers strode silently through the exhibition, their heads encased in gold-hued helmets that supposedly fed data to the various digitally responsive works.

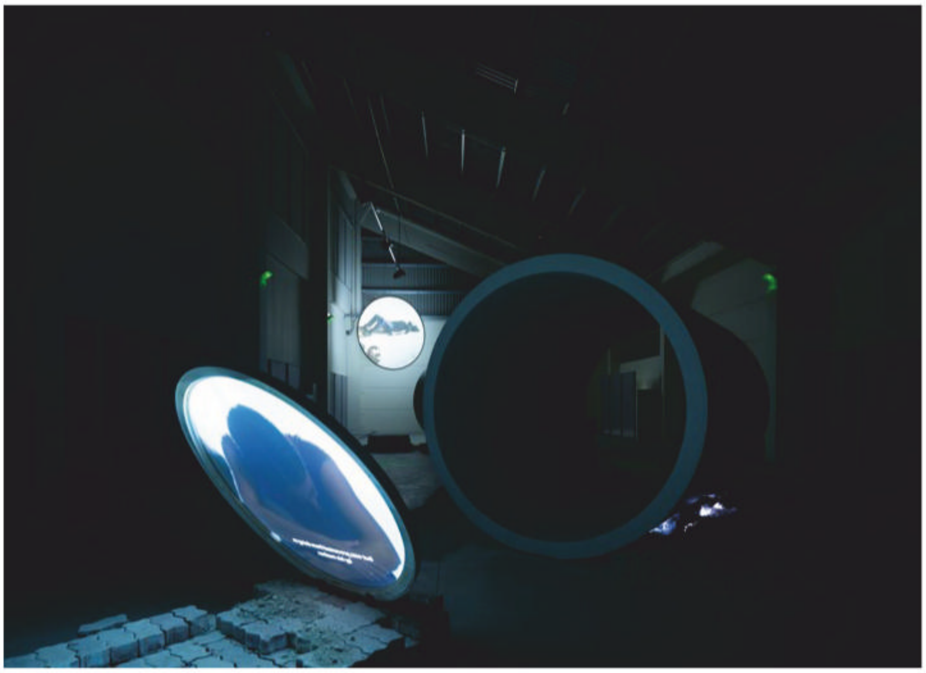
Were we in the post-Enlightenment world now? If so, Huyghe is quick to point out that empiricism and reason, too, have their limits. His most effective caveat is the film *Camata* (2024), set in the Atacama Desert of Chile, the country where he now resides. On the flat, stony ground with a pyramidal peak in the distance sits a strange apparatus comprising robotic arms, a camera, and a large plate mirror. The AI-directed appendages slowly, almost ritualistically, place small transparent spheres around a human skeleton, suggesting that our smart machines may one day bury us—once we, with their help, have utterly depleted Earth.

Thus, the viewer's journey from Creation to post-apocalypse concluded. Along the way, we passed from one sideshow attraction to another, including that darling Monkey Girl. Arguably, the tour is an apt metaphor for the human condition. But what does the carnival teach us? Essentially, that we are mortal and, when it comes to life's most profound questions, mentally adrift in the dark—as God, at Job's expense, once admonished us. It's a timely—and timeless—aesthetic reminder.

RICHARD VINE

PIERRE HUYGHE, *Camata*, 2024, still image of film, robotics driven by machine learning, edited in real time by artificial intelligence, sound, sensors. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris/Los Angeles; Hauser & Wirth, London; Esther Schipper, Berlin/Paris/Seoul; TARO NASU, Tokyo; and Anna Lena Films.





Installation view of **ADELITA HUSNI-BEY**'s *Like a Flood*, 2025, mixed media, two-channel video installation, 18-channel audio: 45 min, at Sharjah Biennial 16, 2025. Photo by Danko Stjepanovic. Courtesy the Sharjah Art Foundation.

Sharjah Biennial 16 *to carry*

Various locations

What does it mean to bear the weight of sociopolitical histories, ancestral knowledge, and collective memory? How do we transmute the gaping wounds of intergenerational grief and trauma into active, forward-looking modes of healing and resistance—especially as the world continues to sink into anthropogenic crises, with seemingly no salvation in sight?

Such dire concerns pervaded the 16th Sharjah Biennial (SB16), which opened on February 6, shortly after US President Donald Trump announced his disturbing plans to "take over" the Gaza Strip. The shocking proposal was partly drowned by the never-ending reportage about wars, economic downturns, and environmental disasters in today's media landscape, but it set the stage for an art event dedicated to challenging the Western world order.

This endeavor began in 2003, when Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi took charge of the longest-running international art exhibition in the wider Gulf region. Previously, the event centered on Islamic art, but Al Qasimi was determined to revamp old biennial formulas. "No more country representation that divided artists into a handful of national pavilion-like booths," she declared in a recent interview with *The Korea Times*, "and no more having the show in a trade center." Under that directive, and the enigmatic theme "to carry," SB16 unfurled across more than a dozen venues in the emirate, including museums, heritage sites, vacant buildings, villages, and even desert terrain. With 650 works by nearly 200 artists of different backgrounds, the event explored cultural narratives and ways of living with "multiple temporalities of embodied pasts and imagined futures," as the curatorial statement explained.

Reflecting this polyvalent framework, this year's edition was led by an all-female team of curators— Natasha Ginwala, Amal Khalaf, Zeynep Öz, Megan Tamati-Quennell, and Alia Swastika—who each employed unique methodologies focused on amplifying marginalized and Indigenous voices. A daunting strategy, no doubt, especially in the face of an art world that continues to be steered by Western political, economic, and aesthetic ideals while paradoxically celebrating anti-colonial, anti-capitalist artists and artmaking—as evidenced by the glut of international expositions in recent years foregrounding diverse, "peripheral" visions (think the 60th Venice Biennale, Documenta 15, and so on). But at what point does it all become a mere navel-gazing spectacle? How does one emphasize decoloniality without reducing it to hollow gestures?

Rather than blunting the subversive potential of art, Al Qasimi and the SB16 curatorial team put together a formidable show that evoked what feminist scholar Sara Ahmed calls an "out-of-skin" experience. The roundup repeatedly jolted viewers out of apathy with a vast range of collaborative projects examining the oft-forgotten or overlooked vestiges of Western imperialism, as well as its ongoing effects on our minds, bodies, and environments.

One such affective work was Adelita Husni-Bey's *Like a Flood* (2025), a monumental video installation about the colonial legacy of water withdrawal in Libya. Set up in a lofty, blacked-out hall within the Kalba Ice Factory, a former industrial edifice in the southern outskirts of Sharjah, the work features two circular projections of recently unearthed black-and-white photographs taken during Italy's 1911–43 occupation of Libya. Image after image shows colonists depleting aquifers or building irrigation systems on confiscated land, with interspersed footage depicting Libya's failing hydro-infrastructure in the present day. (All of this, viewers could watch while sitting inside giant concrete dam pipes situated within the space.) Aside from exposing the destructive nature of settler agriculture, Husni-Bey's video project underlines how looting another country's resources sets up harmful practices that persist even after political change occurs, and how colonial archives are tools that manipulate our perception of history through selective disclosure and concealment.

In a similar vein, Kuwaiti-Puerto Rican artist Alia Farid examined the adverse impacts of water and oil extraction in Iraq's southern marshlands through six newly commissioned pieces from her 2025 *Talismans (Kupol LR*

3303) series, displayed at the Al Hamriya Studios on the Sharjah coast. Building on her research into thousands of Iraqi artifacts at Stanford University—which were ”acquired” during the US invasion of Iraq in 2003—Farid created large-scale, opaque panels made of blue faience and polyester resin, embedded with images from her family’s archive overlain with spiritual glyphs. In layering the petroleum-based material with tender snapshots of her maternal relatives, Farid subtly alludes to the connection between industrial practices and environmental devastation, as well as the fragility of cultures and lives amid broader geopolitical machinations.

Indigenous stories were especially prevalent in this year’s program. At the Old Al Diwan Al Amiri (formerly the Emirati rulers’ court), viewers encountered the 20-minute video work *Whakamoemoeā* (2025) by Fijian New Zealand artist Luke Willis Thompson, which features a hypothetical state telecast in 2040 announcing a new constitution for Aotearoa. The report, delivered by the real-life Māori broadcaster Oriini Kaipara in her native tongue, outlines the country’s fictive move from European colonial-style rule to a plurinational administration that recognizes Indigenous philosophies and rights. As Kaipara ardently proclaims that “whoever you are, if you are on this land, you will be sheltered and cared for,” the address envisions—or demands—restorative justice for native peoples, which entails political self-determination and a communitarian ethos.

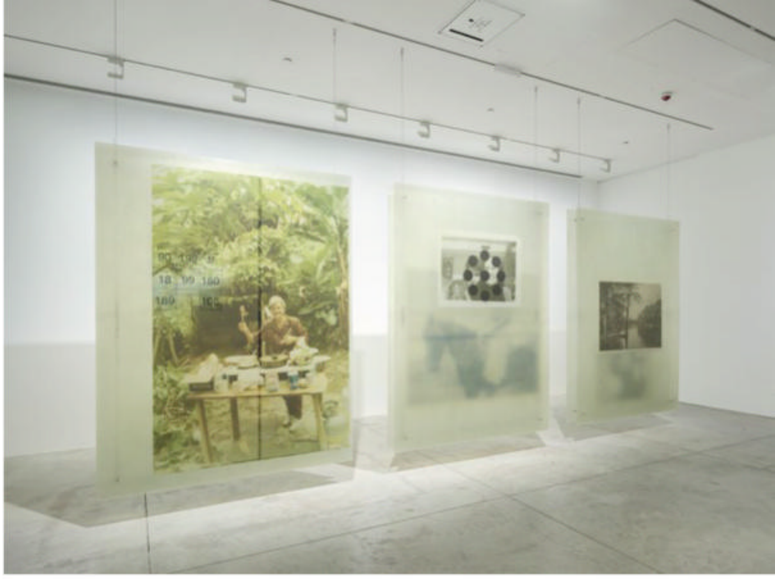
Diné composer and musician Raven Chacon’s captivating sound installation, *A Wandering Breeze* (2025), was located in the Al Madam Buried Village, an abandoned hamlet in the Sharjah desert. The site-specific work responded to what was originally a public housing project for the local Al Kubti community, constructed as part of a government modernization initiative following the seven Arab Emirates’ unification in 1971–72. But as the settlement was ill-adapted to the desert’s shifting dunes, its nomadic residents departed soon after, leaving the empty houses to slowly sink into the sand.

Here, Chacon produced a haunting recorded vocalization by Bedouin singers—a piece that roams from house to house through solar-powered speakers installed in each home—as well as two photographs: *Mariano Lake* and *Chilchinbeto* (both 2025). Showing structures abandoned on reservations in his Navajo homeland, the images call to mind the struggle between native peoples in different parts of the world, where governments have imposed policies that disregard Indigenous values and autonomy. As the phantom voices, at once soulful and eerie, echoed throughout the uninhabited settlement, visitors were left to ponder ideas of forced displacement versus forced placement, absence and presence.

In line with Al Qasimi’s vision of establishing a South-South cooperation through cross-cultural dialogue and transnational solidarity, SB16 affirmed its unwavering support for Palestine through exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and gatherings. In a classroom at the Al Qasimiyah School, Gazan artists Mohammed Al-Hawajri and Dina Mattar showcased several political paintings, most of which they had risked their lives to preserve and bring to the UAE upon fleeing their homeland last April. As the couple had survived genocidal violence, their presence at SB16 was deeply moving, with their salvaged artworks symbolically defying Israel’s attempt to annihilate Palestinian heritage and existence.

Given its expansive scope and complex thematic focus, this year’s Sharjah Biennial risked falling into facile narratives about decoloniality, and yet it remained true to its credo. Through the curators’ conscientious engagement with each artist and their stories, the event was an undeniable labor of love for non-Western and Indigenous peoples and cultures—a welcome antidote in an art world jaded by commercialization and dominated by covert Western paradigms.

ANNETTE MEIER



Installation view of **ALIA FARID**’s *Kupol LR 3303 Talisman 01, 02*, and *03*, 2025, mixed media, dimensions variable, at Sharjah Biennial 16, 2025. Photo by Danko Stjepanovic. Courtesy the Sharjah Art Foundation.

وهما ملزمان بالشفافية والتعاون المشترك
AND ARE REQUIRED TO BE TRANSPARENT AND COLLABORATIVE WITH EACH OTHER

Installation view of **LUKE WILLIS THOMPSON**’s *Whakamoemoeā*, 2024, 4K digital video, color, sound: 21 min, at Sharjah Biennial 16, 2025. Photo by Ivan Erofeev. Courtesy the Sharjah Art Foundation.

Kiang Malingue

Ho Tzu Nyen *Three Stories: Monsters, Opium, Time*

For Ho Tzu Nyen, histories are neither linear nor contained. They are spectral, fragmented, and often resistant to the kind of authoritative narratives that empires, colonizers, or even anthropologists have sought to impose. His 2015 video *The Nameless* conjures a ghostly version of the real-life Lai Teck, an enigmatic triple agent who moved between colonial powers, Communist insurgents, and revolutionary forces during the 1930s and ’40s in Southeast Asia. Known by more than 50 pseudonyms, this “nameless” figure slipped between identities and across boundaries, leaving elusive traces of his existence across official archives. Lai Teck is not just an individual for Ho, but an allegory for Southeast Asia itself—a region as manifold as the character he portrays.

Ho’s exhibition “Three Stories: Monsters, Opium, Time,” recently on view at Kiang Malingue in Hong Kong, continued to explore what constitutes Southeast Asian identity as well as how one narrates such a politically and culturally diverse region. On the ground floor, visitors encountered a video installation from the artist’s project *Night March of Hundred Monsters* (2021–). Placed within a miniature movie theater setting, the animation is projected onto three translucent horizontal glass panels arranged in a superimposed sequence, deliberately echoing the format of Japanese handscrolls. Traditionally depicted as a procession of supernatural creatures (*yōkai*) marching through the streets, Ho reimagines this nightly parade, infusing it with Japan’s history of imperialism in Southeast Asia and a distinct layer of pop cultural references. Accompanied by a haunting soundtrack, the video projection unfolds in a dreamlike sequence that slowly moves from a prehistoric landscape into a contemporary one; visitors see both mythological characters rooted in traditional folklore, such as the *kitsune* (fox spirit) or *kappa* (river sprite), and hybrid creatures that evoke a sense of overlapping realities.

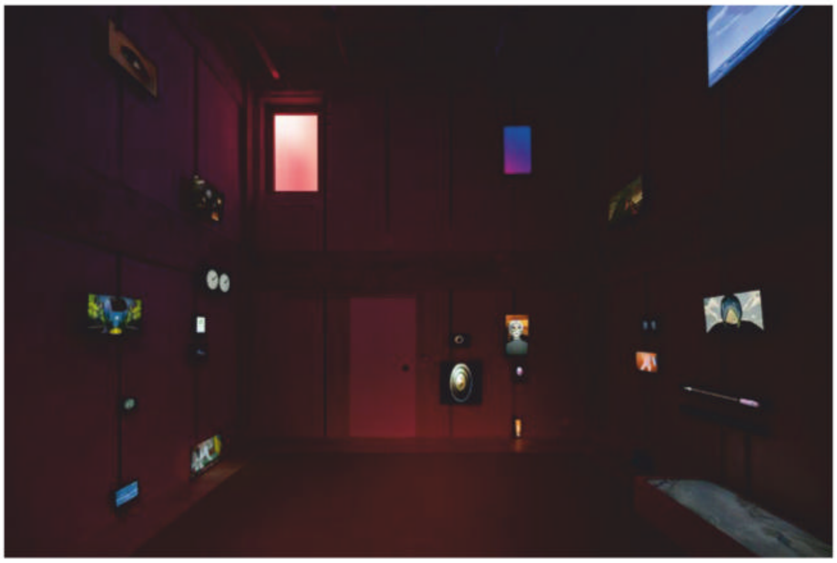
One of these monsters is *kokutai*, the national body. The figure first appears in a white shirt and red cape—a costume that Ho specifically chose to mirror the Japanese flag—and it gradually morphs into the grotesque form of Tetsuo from Katsuhiro Otomo’s 1988 legendary animation *Akira*. In the background, a voice narrates that “the state builders of Meiji Japan used the ideological apparatuses . . . to redirect the heterogeneous complexes of local beliefs in the supernatural toward a homogenized belief.” Here, by weaving together the monstrous, all-absorbing animated character and the abstract yet pervasive concept of national mythology, Ho suggests that Japan’s modernization project not only standardized folklore, but also forged new political and cultural ideologies that would later shape its imperial ambitions. The transformation into Tetsuo, whose body grotesquely expands until it self-destructs, becomes a metaphor that connects Japan’s trajectory as an imperial power to its postwar trauma and pop-cultural legacy.

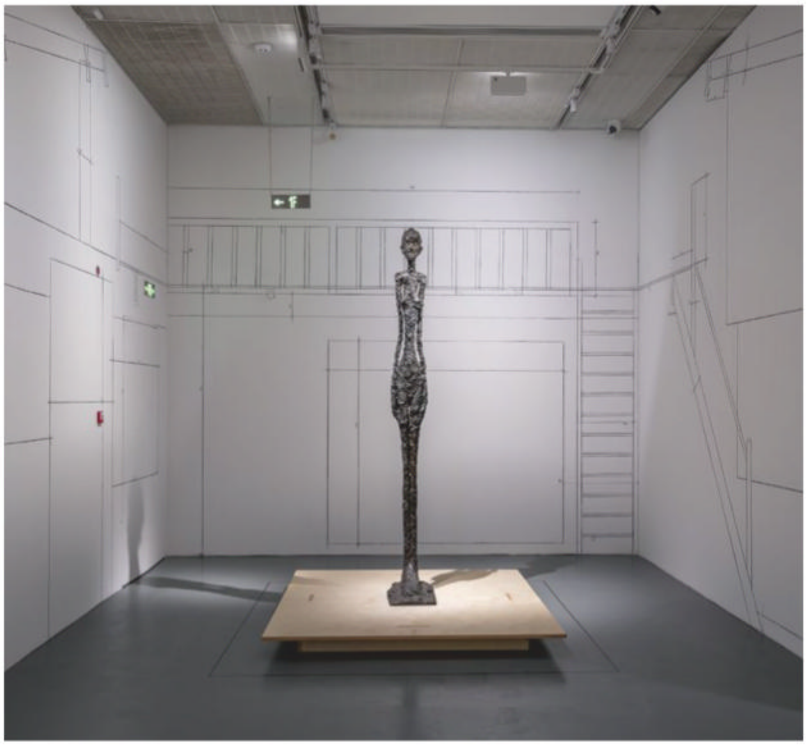
On the second floor, a video work titled *O for Opium* (2023) presented a swirling, dreamlike montage that layers history, personal memory, and cinematic sequences into a hallucinatory haze. At its core is archival footage detailing Singapore’s historical role as a British-controlled distribution center for the opium trade of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Ho blends this history with sequences drawn from Stanley Kwan’s 1987 film *Rouge* and Sergio Leone’s epic *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984). The lush, melancholic visuals, along with the intoxicating smoke, light, and atmosphere, contrast with the historical violence of the opium trade captured in the black-and-white footage. By foregrounding opium as a substance that, while destructive, has often been romanticized as seductive and otherworldly in popular culture, Ho reminds us that history itself is also a process of mythmaking.

The top-floor installation, *Timepieces* (2023), consisting of 43 individual screens, explores the multiplicities of time. Ranging from one-second animated loops to 24-hour computational cycles, the projections comprise an eclectic range of animation, including references to Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), the stillness of Yasujiro Ozu’s domestic spaces, Félix González-Torres’s clocks, and a beating heart. Visitors watching these varied expressions of duration and movement are prompted to consider how time passes, accumulates, and dissolves. “The challenge,” Ho explains, “was how the multiple can be composed, and how these different kinds of time can coexist without hierarchy and without collapsing into an empty pluralism.” In the darkened space, the work suggests that time is cyclical, fractured, and heterogeneous, while subtly questioning whether temporal experiences outside of its linear flow might still be reclaimed.

LOUIS LU

Installation view of **HO TZU NYEN**’s *Timepieces*, 2023, 43 flatscreens, apps, and videos, durations variable, at Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong, 2025. Photo by Kwan Sheung Chi. Courtesy Kiang Malingue.





Installation view of **ALBERTO GIACOMETTI**'s *Tall Woman I*, 1960, bronze, 272 × 35 × 54 cm. Courtesy ChunYangTai Arts and Cultural Center, Langtou.

ChunYangTai Arts and Cultural Center

Figure as Monument: Alberto Giacometti in Langtou

Alberto Giacometti's palpably angst-ridden figures recently made their way to Guangdong, where they appeared even more anxious than usual. To mark the 60th anniversary of Sino-French diplomatic relations, Chinese architect Yung Ho Chang and Emilie Bouvard, director of collections and scientific programs at the Fondation Giacometti, co-curated "Figure as Monument: Alberto Giacometti in Langtou," bringing 79 Giacometti works from Paris to a 700-year-old village in southern China. Addressing the relationship between Giacometti's oeuvre and the built environment, the exhibition placed sculptures, paintings, and drawings by the Swiss modern master in dialogue with works by three contemporary Chinese artists as well as the ChunYangTai Arts and Cultural Center itself—a contemporary complex designed to integrate harmoniously with the lush natural setting and ancient architecture of the historical village. The juxtaposition was thoughtful, verging on overly earnest, and Giacometti's anguished figures—uprooted and displaced to a foreign land—projected heightened nervous energy.

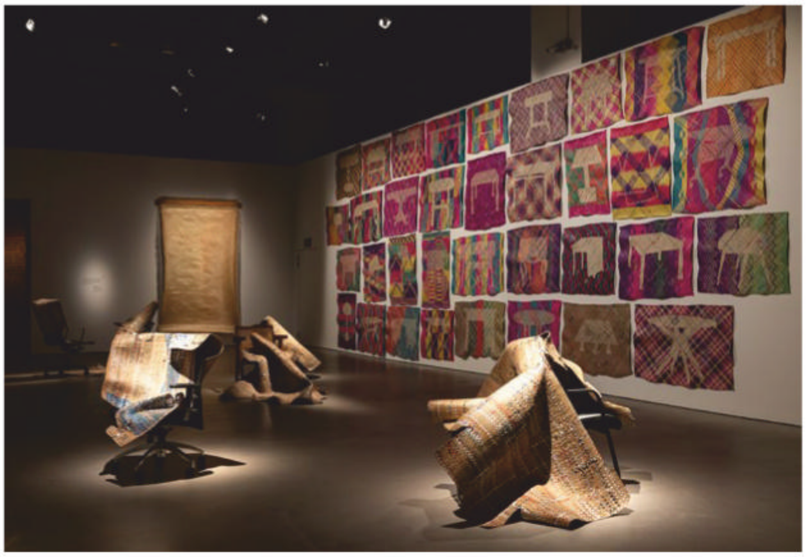
The interior galleries are modestly sized, establishing an intimate viewing experience. The first room featured a long central table lined with small busts, as well as sitting and standing figures dating from the immediate post-WWII period to the early 1960s. Spindly, petite Annettes (sculptures of the artist's wife) were peppered among robust male busts, their rigid postures and hollow gazes emanating stricken, disconcerted tension. With all the other works in bronze, two busts in plaster—raw and immediate—stood out: one of Diego, the artist's brother, the other of Japanese philosophy professor Isaku Yanaihara, with whom Giacometti had a close friendship from the mid-1950s onward. A specialist in Existentialism who worked on the first Japanese translation of 1942 novel Albert Camus's *L'Étranger*, Yanaihara was Giacometti's most recurrent model outside of the artist's family from 1956 to 1961. The sessions during which Yanaihara sat for Giacometti were long and grueling for both, and the friendship was, perhaps, the closest Giacometti ever got to East Asia in his life.

Regrettably, no monumental *Walking Man* trekked to Langtou; the two largest sculptures in the show were *Tall Woman I* (1960) and *The Cage* (1949–50). In one chamber, *Tall Woman*, nearly 272 centimeters high, stood solitary against white walls inscribed with a one-to-one architecture schema of Giacometti's Montparnasse studio. The presentation—intended to highlight Giacometti's famously cramped working quarters—unfortunately fell short, as the diagrammatic lines interfered with the impact of the sculpture. In the subsequent gallery, *The Cage*—almost 91 centimeters tall, but in a larger room—imparted a gripping presence despite its familiarity. Lithe and bladelike, the female figure stretches out both arms like Christ on the cross, grasping the armature of the cage that confines her. At once fragile and imposing, she powerfully demarcated and activated the space around her.

While the walls of the first two galleries were adorned with works highlighting Giacometti's exceptional draftsmanship (gems include paintings transferred from his studio wall onto canvas or plaster, and poignant sketches of Matisse in his final months), subsequent rooms were lined with black-and-white photographs of local architecture by Chinese photographer Zeng Li. Zeng's style is stark, characterized by full-frontal perspective and perpetually bleak weather; positioned opposite, Giacometti's sculptures vacantly stared back.

The exhibition concluded outdoors, with commissioned installations that the artist duo He Jianxiang and Jiang Ying had created in homage to Giacometti. On the rooftop, cast-iron headstones with cut-out Giacomettian silhouettes engaged with the idea of negative space, allowing viewers to peer out through the sculptures to a stunning panorama: idyllic rice fields, banyan trees, quaint Ming and Qing dynasty buildings. Amid the picturesque scene stood a single figure immersed in contemplation of the landscape, a poignant image embodying harmonious tranquility. From a distance, its slender, elongated silhouette closely resembled that of *Tall Woman I*. For a fleeting moment, one could believe that she had finally found her peace, but in fact the sculpture—upright yet flat—was not a Giacometti after all.

MICHELE CHAN



Installation view of **YEE I-LANN**'s "Mansau-Ansau," at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), 2024. Courtesy SAM.

Yee I-Lann *Mansau-Ansau*

Singapore Art Museum

In her recent solo exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum, artist Yee I-Lann beckoned visitors to sit on a *tikar*, a Malay mat of the sort made in her northern Borneo homeland of Sabah and central to her artistic iconography. Stepping shoeless onto *TEPO PUTIH (White Mat)* (2019), an oversized, unadorned example produced in collaboration with Bajau Sama Dilaut weavers from Omadal Island, one immediately felt its inviting softness underfoot. The pandanus leaf mat was a gathering point for experiencing *PANGKIS* (2021), a video in which dancers, connected by a reimagined seven-headed Murut warrior headdress, perform hypnotic movements punctuated by cries that echoed throughout the gallery.

Such procedures lie at the core of Yee's practice, which draws strength from kinship, ancestral knowledge, and the intimacies of communal labor. These themes converged in "Mansau-Ansau," the exhibition's title, drawn from a Dusun phrase meaning "a journey without a predetermined destination." The term also denotes a new weave developed with Dusun Murut weavers from inland Keningau. The pattern, featured in the wall-hung *A map of Mansau-ansau* (2024), changes subtly as it progresses.

This openness to exploration underpins *Sulu Stories* (2005), an early photo series that recasts narratives of the Sulu Sea. Through what she calls "speculative photomontage," Yee combines archival images with her own photographs to challenge the colonial gaze. The sea horizon, photographed by Yee from both the Philippines and Sabah sides, unifies these images, serving as both demarcation and bridge. At the heart of the series is *Map*, which depicts a Malaysian woman and a Filipino man standing a few feet apart. Strands of the woman's flowing hair form a map of the Sabah and Sulu areas on the man's back, evoking the region's entangled histories.

Another photo series, *Picturing Power* (2013), draws from Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum archives. Yee's compositions—most of them monochromatic—examine cartography, administrative control, and the violence inherent in colonialism. Central to the work is the recurring motif of the table, paired with surveying instruments and field cameras—symbols of how hegemonic powers rendered societies comprehensible and governable. The images, recalling anthropologist James C. Scott's concept of "state legibility," underscore the lasting influence of colonial systems on contemporary social structures and perceptions.

TIKAR/MEJA/PLASTIK (2023) was a striking floor-to-ceiling installation comprising 35 vibrant mats, woven from pandanus leaves and recycled plastic by Bajau Sama Dilaut weavers. Each mat features a silhouette of a table, blending heritage and contemporary design. While the table symbolizes colonial hierarchy, patriarchy, and exclusivity, the *tikar* offers a counterpoint, a vision of power rooted in inclusivity, collaboration, and community. Traditionally crafted by women across the Nusantara archipelago, these mats transcend their utilitarian functions as seating, bedding, dining spaces, or ceremonial objects, becoming sites of communal resistance and agency. As Yee succinctly states: "To decolonize is to see the table and see the mat."

Yee's fascination with woven forms began years ago. *The Orang Besar Series* (2010), its title referring to local power brokers, employed batik techniques, combined with digital photomedia, to expose the region's sociopolitical fissures. This sensitivity to materiality and its conceptual possibilities also informs *The Tukad Kad Sequence #1* (2021), a mat that examines architectural spaces as intersections of the personal and the public. The composition features a ceiling fan, louvre windows, flying tables, and ribbon-like motifs, which Yee calls *guik* or worms, inspired by her Kadazan grandmother's weaving and her warnings about worms that might burrow into a child's skin. Most remarkably, Yee harnesses the lenticular interplay of various patterns to create an ever-shifting interior space. Up close, the intricate plaiting resembles pixels, seamlessly merging traditional and modern knowledge systems, transforming the mat into a symbolic wormhole.

The exhibition conveyed a powerful sense of movement and journey, epitomized by *Flatten The Box* (2024), a newly commissioned installation placed at its center. Mats woven from cardboard and metallic strips draped over mismatched chairs, forming an archipelago that evoked the timeless ebb and flow of people and goods across vast oceans. By emphasizing the fluidity of geographies and identities, the work dissolved rigid boundaries into spaces for storytelling and shared wisdom. It reflected Yee's commitment to nurturing connection and understanding—offering, in a fractured world, a quiet yet potent blueprint for healing.

YVONNE WANG

Centre for Contemporary Art at Bikaner House

Shilpa Gupta

StillTheyKnowNotWhatIDream (2021), shown in Shilpa Gupta's solo exhibition at the Bikaner House art center in New Delhi, featured several flap-display boards of the sort once ubiquitous in train stations and airports. The signs present words and phrases distilled, like poetry, from various thoughts penned by the midcareer artist over the years—for instance, "as we slowly nearly always / give in." The works remind us of transit waiting zones, in-between spaces of commingled anxiety and rest. But they can also evoke harsh political realities: "Raid Histories / Erase Voices." The letters clatter violently as they flip, drawing our eyes to the upcoming word. The term "facts" becomes "fcats" and "cannot" becomes "cnat"—intentional misspellings that nod to the frequent distortions and fabrications in daily discourse, both public and private.

Despite the gaps and errors, our minds quickly piece these fragments into meaningful statements, reminding us that we are not blind to the linguistic ploys of friends, businesses, or political powers. Gupta also challenges the exercise of surveillance and suspicion in works such as *There is No Explosive in This—Objects Confiscated at the Airport* (2008–23), in which familiar objects like scissors and knives—all banned from airliner cabins—are painted white and arranged into a spine-like garland on the wall.

In a passageway was *100 Hand-drawn Maps of India* (2007–08), comprising a table on which an oscillating fan flips the pages of a cartographic book. These quick renderings from memory by different hands present a range of imperfect, psychologically inflected maps at odds with the rigidity of borders claimed by absolutist nation-states.

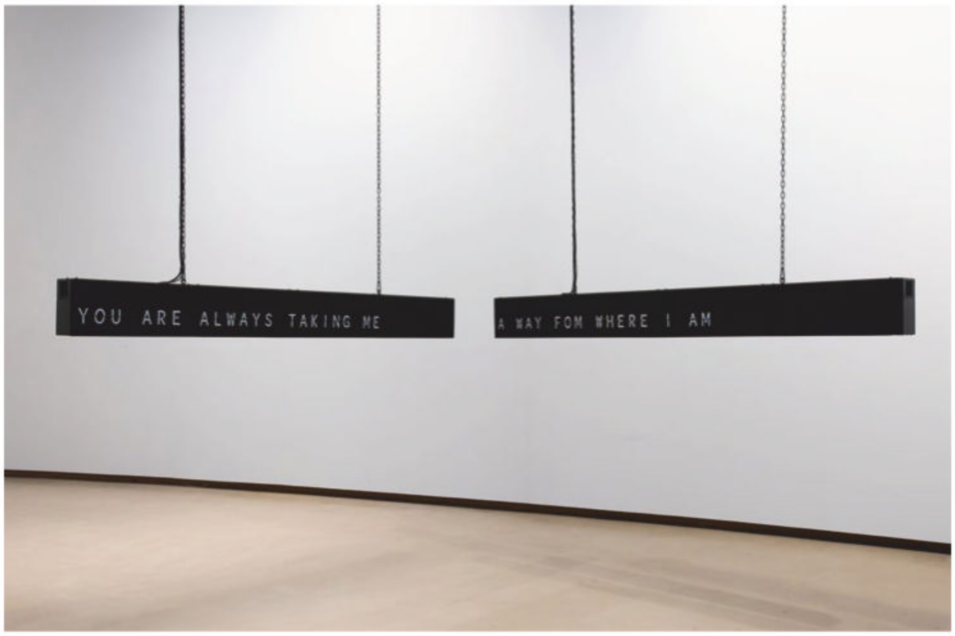
Gupta frequently uses language, sound, and silences because these elements travel freely, like air, with no regard for borders or laws. In the installation *Listening Air* (2019–22), microphones programmed to serve as speakers echo voices of resistance and hope connecting a diversity of marginalized peoples from across the globe. Dimly lit with suspended bulbs, the texts on metal stands include songs of solidarity sung across forests, fields, and streets in protest and commemoration. Among these we hear a version of Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz's *Hum Dekhenge* (1981), its title meaning "we will see." Over the decades, it has become an anthem for protests in the subcontinent.

We are directly reminded of the absent, perhaps incarcerated, body in several works. In *Untitled (Spoken Poem in a Bottle)* (2018–) apothecary bottles are displayed on shelves and tagged with lines of censored poetry. Each container holds breath captured from Gupta as she whispered these verses. In *Untitled (Distance Between Two Tears)* (2021), a metal rod, pointed at both ends, indicates the distance between the artist's eyes. *A Liquid, the Mouth Froze* (2018) is a cloud-like gunmetal cast of the negative space of an open mouth. Below it hangs a narrow band of metal inscribed with an account of someone being accosted on the street and having fluid forced in their mouth. Gupta also reminds us how confinement is used as a method to break willpower, as in *Visitor Hours* (2021), a narrow pie-section of a clockface, evoking the short time allotted for family members, friends, and comrades to meet with prisoners.

Gupta's sparse, considered sculptures commemorate resistance and perseverance in the face of dispossession, isolation, and persecution. In *Untitled (Tower of Broken Pencil Points)* (2021), we see a score of graphite nibs stacked into a delicate, precarious-looking tower—reminding us that poets and artists must continue to work, always aspiring spiritually, even when a hostile regime damages their tools.

MARIO D'SOUZA

SHILPA GUPTA, *StillTheyKnowNotWhatIDream*, 2021, motion flapboard, 13× 237.5 ×24 cm. Courtesy Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi.



Arpita Singh *Remembering*

Serpentine Galleries

"Amnesia lies at the core of the digital age. We have an overflow of information but not necessarily more memory," said Hans Ulrich Obrist, artistic director of London's Serpentine Galleries, to mark the opening of Arpita Singh's exhibition at the gallery in March. "Remembering," which brought together 165 works created by Singh over the course of her prolific six-decade career, was the artist's first solo show outside of her native India.

As its title suggests, the survey highlighted Singh's exploration of memory—especially recollections of war, gender-based violence, and communal riots. Singh portrays the human body as a recipient of collective memories, inherited at birth. These individual, ancestral, and social recollections come together in thick paint on her borderless canvases. As Obrist notes, by "engaging with the local and the global, exploring influences of Bengali folk art as well as a modernist exploration of identity, [Singh] brings the universe onto her canvas."

Less than a decade into her career, Singh moved away from figuration, spending six years repeating dots and lines in black and white across her compositions, reverting back to basic elements to learn how to intuitively create forms in relation to one another. When one day Singh's painting knife accidentally formed an X, she interpreted it as the Roman numeral and from then on, words and symbols began to appear on her canvases.

Singh's figures, rendered in her signature faux-naïve style, appear untethered from gravity. *My Lollipop City: Gemini Rising* (2005), for example, shows a couple floating in a blue sky among pink-bordered clouds, a large white bull, and a number of planes. Below these figures lies a map of Delhi depicting monuments, white buses, men dressed in black jackets, and the words "This Map Is Faulty / Do Not Follow It"—an allusion to the sense of failing governance in the city.

In the lower right corner of the painting is a tiny black car with the word "Homeward" written above it, anticipating Singh's 2020 work of that title. The latter composition bears phrases such as "I want to go back home," written in blue, forming the waves of an endless sea. As the hull of a ship pushes through this ocean of words, Singh undermines the solidity of this craft by labeling it a "paper boat," thus creating a sense of defeat and loss.

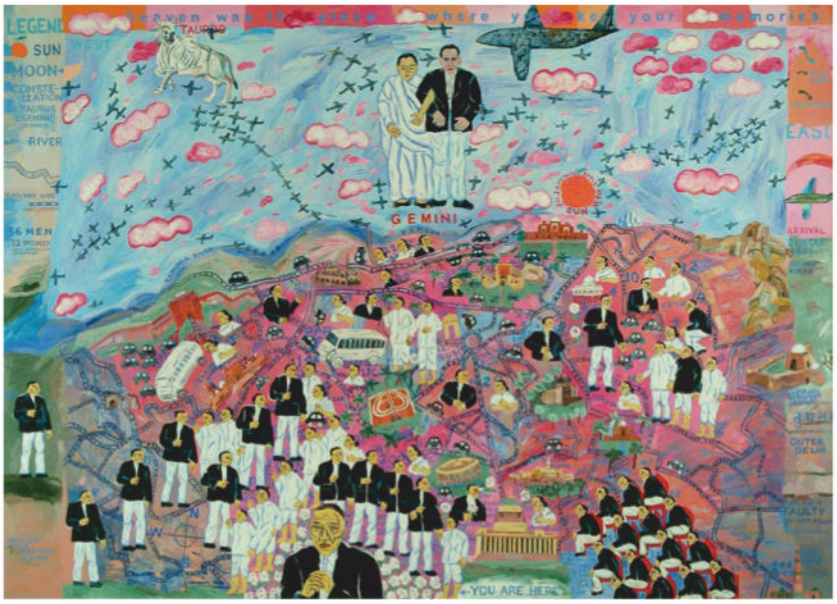
Born in 1937, a decade before the Partition of India, the painter is part of a generation that art historian Devika Singh argues "grew up with mass violence and displacement," striving "to nurture social ties to heal and conceal some of the horrors." Consequently, while deeply personal, Singh's work also channels collective experiences informed by India's unsettled history. It has elements of universality that allow meanings to shift with the viewer's gaze. The grief and loss captured in works like *Homeward* confront the feeling of home and intimacy created in *Couple Having Tea* (1992).

Singh often incorporates soft, earthy tones inspired by traditional Kangra paintings from northern India, along with multicolored borders and vibrant fruits and plants. In *Couple Having Tea*, a barefoot woman and her partner sit peacefully among flowers and trees. These figures are reminiscent of Singh and her husband Paramjit Singh, also an artist, who she claims never remembers to buy his own paints, but rather borrows her supplies to create his paintings.

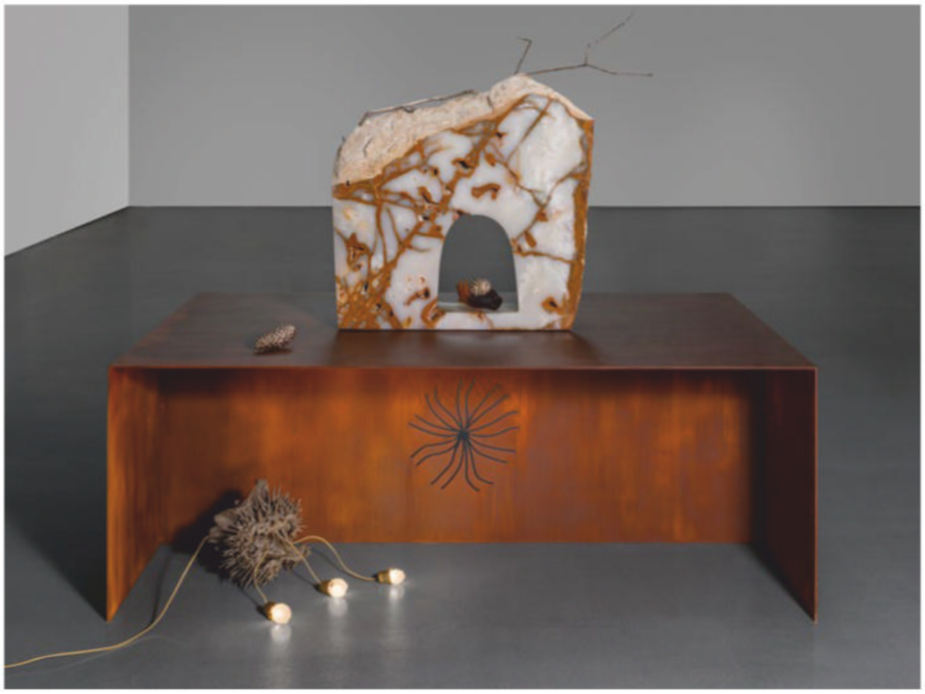
A crowd, predominantly dressed in white, appears behind the couple, with one man in the center carrying flowers. Toward the bottom of the composition, a young soldier is shown saluting alongside a blur of faces and cars at the work's periphery, contrasting the passage of time with the couple's serenity. "The present and the past exist in Singh's work but she resists being reduced by them," Obrist writes.

Through embracing large-scale canvases in works like *My Mother* (1993), Singh is able to incorporate a range of narratives. In this piece, a woman in a white sari stands resolutely as chairs, faces, soldiers, and vehicles move in a dizzying flurry of violence and grief across the canvas. This "mother" figure is a pivotal motif in many of Singh's works, an aging body stuck in the midst of men in black suits, airplanes, and guns, she questions the frightening, warring world. Through her exploration of motherhood, death, and vulnerability, Singh plumbs the everyday nature of violence in the world.

RHEA MATHUR



ARPITA SINGH, *My Lollipop City: Gemini Rising*, 2005, oil on canvas, 152 × 213 cm. Courtesy the artist and Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi.



Installation view of "Kelly Akashi," at Lisson Gallery, Los Angeles, 2025. Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery.

Kelly Akashi

Lisson Gallery

For her eponymous solo show at Lisson Gallery in Los Angeles, American artist Kelly Akashi took an almost Ikebana approach to her installation. As in the poetic Japanese art of floral arranging, she readjusted and repositioned her hewn and cast sculptural objects down to the minute of the exhibition's opening. Originally intending to open the show at the end of January, Akashi suddenly found herself, like tens of thousands of Angelenos, completely displaced, as her home and attached studio—and the artworks within—were lost to the Eaton Fire that razed her Altadena neighborhood. Akashi solicited the local art community, seeking donations and other support, and, as a result, was able to almost entirely remake her show in under a month. The fires burned an astonishing 14,000 acres—roughly the size of Manhattan—and Akashi's show was a poignant reminder of the individual anguish experienced by those affected.

When it was safe to return to the site of her home and studio, Akashi trawled the ashes to recover a few pieces that had withstood the fires, though irreparably changed. Among several new additions to the works on display were bronze casts of Akashi's own hands and tree branches, retrieved directly from the wreckage. In one particular work, *Witness (Altadena)* (2025), a delicate branch teetered precariously upon the bronze palm, intimating the way in which the artist's life had been profoundly transformed by these fires, and the rationale that our existence is at the whims of nature's balance.

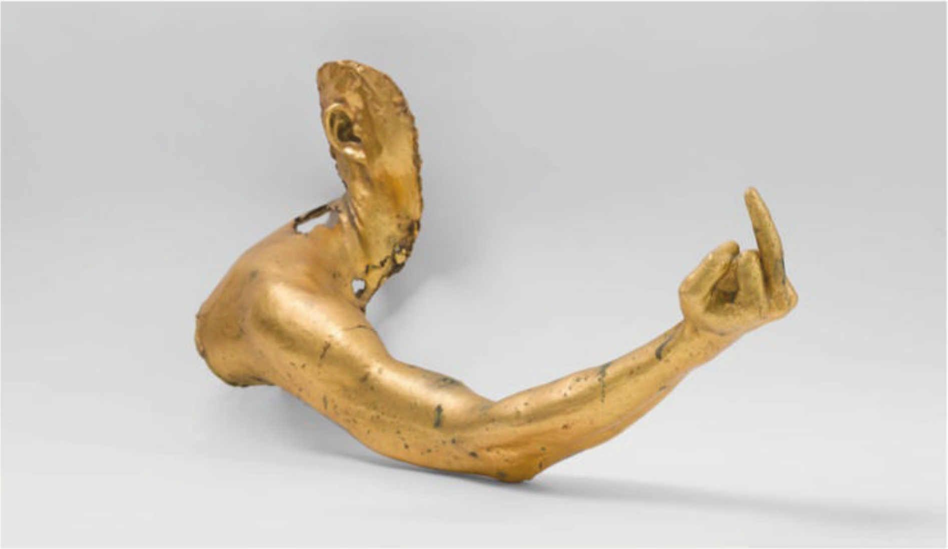
Sculptural objects fashioned from bronze, glass, crystal, and more were tenderly placed on whittled onyx, alabaster, and basalt, displayed on four Corten steel platforms. These arrangements, all from her *Monument* series (2024–25) are a nod to Richard Serra's monumental yet minimal sculptures, though Akashi's are more domestic and emotive, and at times reminiscent of the knickknacks one might find at their grandmother's home. In fact, lace doilies passed down to Akashi from her grandmother feature in several works from *Monument*.

Among the wreckage of her studio, Akashi also found a dainty hand-blown glass chain in a kiln, flecks of gray debris dotting the clear glass. A cast bronze mask of her face and two enlarged seedpods were still intact, though with deeper, darker patinas from being burned. These cast seedpods continued to shed ashes onto the gallery floor, a gentle reminder of the sustained cycle of survival and weathering change.

Monument (Regeneration) (2024–25)—a globular web of clear borosilicate glass—demonstrates Akashi's prodigious technical prowess. Similar to a previous sculpture Akashi showed in New York, *Cosmic Axis* (2022–23), the work takes on a renewed meaning in this context. The "roots" allude to fervent calls by community leaders to stay in Los Angeles and rebuild (instead of decamping to more affordable regions), while the intricate web of glass acts as a metaphor for the connections between people and community, and the flower shoots represent a glimpse of hope for future regrowth.

In American science fiction writer Octavia Butler's 1993 post-apocalyptic novel *Parable of the Sower*, set in a fictional 2025, a prophetic narrator describes a blaze that engulfs her home, family, and neighborhood. Grappling with survival in a climate-ravaged world and leading by example, the narrator begins to develop ideas for a new belief system called "Earthseed," centered on principles of community, with mantras such as "God is Change" and "All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you." In the wake of the tragic fire that engulfed Los Angeles this year, the prescience of Butler's novel became chilling. Akashi emerged as a fitting if unlikely example of resilience and strength, and her poignant show at Lisson was emblematic of cycles of tragedy and loss, and, subsequently, the power of community to support rebuilding and regeneration.

JENNIFER S. LI



AI WEIWEI, *Arm with the Finger in Bronze*, 2000, gilt bronze, 35.5 × 70 × 23 cm. Courtesy the artist; The Albertina, Vienna; and Lisa Rastl and Reiner Riedler.

Ai, Rebel: The Art and Activism of Ai Weiwei

Seattle Art Museum

Ai Weiwei's latest US museum exhibition, a survey of his four-decade career, came at a particularly tense time in global history. The prolific artist, known for art that comments on human rights and political oppression, presented over 130 works at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM).

"Ai, Rebel: The Art and Activism of Ai Weiwei," echoed the title of Isaac Asimov's classic science fiction collection *I, Robot* (1950). While Asimov examined the relationship between humans and technology, Ai deals with related issues of systemic power and the suppression of truth. His defiant yet playful spirit was evident in photographs from two crucial periods in his career: his time in New York during the 1980s and the era following his return to Beijing in 1993. The presentation featured iconic works such as the literally titled photo triptych *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995) and the series *Study of Perspective* (1995–2011), in which Ai raises his middle finger toward cultural landmarks in China and around the world. The rebellious theme was further emphasized by three versions of *Arm with the Finger in Bronze* (2000–04), forming a procession to the exhibition's introductory didactic.

The show was organized around two key themes: materialism and power. The first section explored Ai's critiques of consumerism, globalization, and ideological tension. His early works—such as *Profile of Marcel Duchamp in a Coat Hanger* (1986), a wire hanger bent into a profile of Duchamp, and *Safe Sex* (1988), a raincoat with a protruding condom—reflect the influence of Dadaism and Duchamp's readymades. Ai continued this investigation in the early 2000s by transforming traditional Chinese furniture into non-utilitarian objects, prompting viewers to reconsider the social constructs of daily life.

One gallery was dedicated to Ai's "Real Fakes," as the section title called them. By recreating and reinterpreting Chinese antiquities, Ai questions the value—both critical and commercial—ordinarily assigned to cultural artifacts. One striking example is *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads: Gold* (2010), consisting of 12 sculptures based on Qing dynasty zodiac heads looted by British and French troops from the Old Summer Palace in Beijing. Seven pieces replicate the original heads, while Ai reimagined the five that were lost to history. In this space, SAM's curator of Chinese art, Foong Ping, juxtaposed Ai's ceramics with works from the museum's collection.

The second section highlighted Ai's use of art to advocate for victims of natural and humanmade disasters, surveillance, and oppression. Some the most powerful works respond to the 2008 Sichuan earthquake that claimed nearly 90,000 lives, including those of more than 5,000 schoolchildren. *Names of the Student Earthquake Victims Found by Citizens' Investigation* (2008–11) lists the names and personal data of myriad pupils killed in the tragedy; *Snake Ceiling* (2008) comprises hundreds of student backpacks; and *Forge* (2008–12) is a huge assemblage of twisted rebar. These works take direct aim at the Chinese government's lack of transparency. Ai's activism led to his 81-day detention in a secret location in 2011. His installation *81* (2013), a life-size replica of his padded jail cell, allows visitors to vividly imagine the conditions he endured.

Also on view were Ai's recent experiments with LEGO bricks, including recreations of Western masterpieces. In *The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus in Green* (2020) and *Untitled (After Munch)* (2020), Ai humorously inserts a panda—or himself—into the scene, referencing China's now more assertive relationship with the West. The section concluded with two towering LEGO reconstructions of the cover and first page of the *Mueller Report* (2019), highlighting the redactions that obscured key findings about Russia's interference in the US presidential election in 2016. These works serve as a timely reminder of the fragility of democratic institutions.

Finally, the organizers embraced Ai's subversive ethos by positioning two of his marble security cameras at the exit. One camera was placed high in a corner, while the other rested on a marble plinth, gazing at the two *Mueller Report* pages. This last display encouraged visitors to reflect on the role of surveillance—by governments, institutions, and even friends—in shaping the dynamics of power and resistance. "Ai, Rebel" urged viewers to confront uncomfortable truths and reconsider their place in the systems that govern our lives.

TAK PHAM

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Judy Chicago, *Purple Atmosphere*, 1969. © Judy Chicago/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo courtesy of Through the Flower Archives; the artist; Jessica Silverman Gallery; and Jeffrey Deitch.

BOOK REVIEWS

RETURN ENGAGEMENTS
By Việt Lê
Published by Duke University Press
Durham, North Carolina, 2021

VIỆT LÊ
return
ENGAGEMENTS

Recounting his perilous raft escape from Saigon as a child, Việt Lê writes in the preface of his 2021 book *Return Engagements*: “The afterlife of trauma leaves invisible traces.” The Vietnamese-born American artist and critic has long drawn from his life experience to shape his multidisciplinary practice, exploring the legacies of war and displacement in Southeast Asian contemporary art—more specifically, the pitfalls that both regional and diasporic creatives encounter when wrestling with these personal topics.

With a particular focus on Vietnam and Cambodia, *Return Engagements* probes how the art world seemingly expects artists of Southeast Asian descent to continually address tropes of militarization, loss, and dislocation. This expectation, Lê says, is fundamentally rooted in the commercialization of violence and suffering, the fetishization of “exotic” Others, and what he pointedly describes as a “move toward a decolonial aesthetics [that] merely masks a neocolonial ethics.”

In four chapters, Lê surveys ten internationally acclaimed Vietnamese and Cambodian artists who repeatedly revisit their native countries’ bleak histories. But Lê warns that such approaches could verge on self-exploitation, whereby “fixat[ing] on an unhealing wound” leads to a perpetual state of mourning.

Consider Spencer Nakasako’s film *Refugee* (2003), which follows three Cambodian American men who travel to Battambang to reconcile with their relatives after being separated by the brutal Pol Pot regime in the 1970s. The heart-rending reunion is marred by linguistic, cultural, and emotional chasms—painful reminders of the country’s bloody civil war and genocide—and closes with unresolved familial tensions. While Lê maintains the importance of confronting and preserving such grim memories, he warns that dredging up the past without “recuperative politics” feeds into homogenized depictions of misery, to be devoured by a voracious global audience.

Yet Lê acknowledges that, to receive recognition within a Western-centric art world, peripheral artists must often adhere to the “aesthetic, economic, political, and cultural hierarchies” that crave different but digestible narratives. On this basis, transnational individuals tend to gain traction because they possess valuable cultural capital (e.g., overseas education, flexible citizenship, language skills), which allows them to present as “locals” who can translate “insider” knowledge to outside viewers. Through such “strategic cartographies,” as Lê puts it, Southeast Asian diasporic artists capitalize on a fickle art market and remain viable in the West, even while reproaching the latter’s exploitative leanings.

Here, Lê zeroes in on Đỉnh Q. Lê’s 1998 installation series *Damaged Gene*, which features a kiosk “selling” double-hooded children’s clothing and conjoined dolls, referencing the atrocious repercussions of Agent Orange (a toxic herbicide used by the US military in Vietnam that caused severe birth defects). Both “cutesy” and unsettling, the work not only denounces chemical warfare, but also the art world’s “thrill-seeking hunt for . . . objects to display in [its] cabinets of monstrosities,” decrying the global art market’s perverse commodification of non-Western trauma which—as Việt Lê emphasizes—deserves a more thoughtful, remedial engagement.

ANNETTE MEIER

I. M. PEI: LIFE IS ARCHITECTURE
Edited by Shirley Surya and Aric Chen
Published by Thames & Hudson and M+
London, 2024; Hong Kong, 2024

I. M. Pei
Thames & Hudson
M+
Life Is Architecture

Few architects have been as widely celebrated yet as narrowly understood as I. M. Pei. His legacy is often distilled into a handful of sleek, geometric landmarks—the Louvre Pyramid in Paris, the National Gallery of Art East Building in Washington, DC, the Bank of China Tower in Hong Kong—each reinforcing the image of Pei as a master of precision and balance. *Life Is Architecture*, however, moves beyond these familiar icons, tracing Pei’s evolution from a developer’s architect to a master of cultural and material negotiation. Through archival research and a nuanced reading of his career, the book presents Pei not just as a designer of buildings, but as a figure navigating power, history, and innovation across vastly different contexts.

Thematically structured, the book devotes each chapter to a different facet of Pei’s practice, and includes essays by seven contributors such as Joan Ockman, Eric Mumford, and Liiu Linfan. Pei’s education at MIT and Harvard under Walter Gropius is framed not simply as an initiation into Bauhaus modernism, but as the foundation for his lifelong negotiation between tradition and innovation. His years at Webb & Knapp shaped his understanding of urban development, positioning him as an architect who engaged with not only form but also the economic and political forces that shape cities. Later chapters explore his involvement with art and civic spaces, his technical experiments with materials and structures, and his persistence in synthesizing cultural and historical traditions into modern architecture, from the Suzhou Museum to the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.

The book is at its most engaging when it examines the resistance Pei encountered rather than merely cataloging his triumphs. The Louvre Pyramid, now inseparable from the museum's identity, was once dismissed as an eyesore—an intrusive "glass toy" disrupting classical grandeur. Pei, an outsider in the Parisian cultural scene, faced hostility from critics who viewed his modernist intervention as a violation. Yet, through quiet resolve and unwavering clarity of vision, he transformed skepticism into admiration. His insistence on optically pure glass, a material then nonexistent, drove advancements in engineering that redefined architectural transparency. By the time the pyramid was completed, its shifting reflections in the Parisian light led critics to liken it to something else entirely—"a diamond at the heart of the Louvre."

Beyond his professional rigor, the book captures moments of warmth and humor. One anecdote recounts his 100th birthday celebration, where his cake was shaped like the Museum of Islamic Art—a nod to the project that, in his own words, "made him a student again." Even at an age when many would retreat into past successes, Pei remained insatiably curious, immersing himself in Islamic geometry and light. The book's greatest strength lies in these humanizing details—not just what Pei built, but how he thought, adapted, and never stopped learning.

Anchored in archival materials and personal correspondences, *Life Is Architecture* resists mythologizing Pei as a lone genius. Instead, it presents him as a pragmatist, a strategist, and above all, an architect who understood that buildings—like the societies they serve—are never static.

EFFY CAO

ART, WAR AND EXILE IN MODERN KOREA: RETHINKING THE LIFE AND WORK OF LEE QOEDE

By Jinyoung Anna Jin
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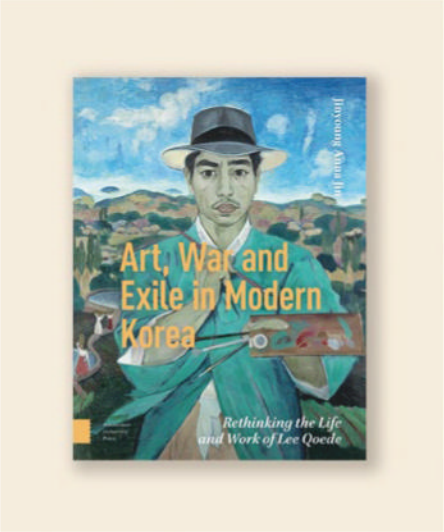

Jinyoung Anna Jin
Art, War and Exile in Modern Korea
Rethinking the Life and Work of Lee Qoede

In recent years, Korean culture has sparked the interest of global curators, collectors, and scholars alike. From pioneering Dansaekhwa artists Park Seo-Bo and Ha Chong-Hyun to early modernists Kim Whanki and Yoo Youngkuk, a growing number of Korean names are now familiar to audiences worldwide. Last year's 60th Venice Biennale, however, featured a painter that most visitors had never heard of: Lee Qoede (1913–65), virtually unknown outside of his homeland, whose art historical legacy has been unfairly obscured due to his defection to North Korea after the Korean War (1950–53).

Art historian Jinyoung Anna Jin examines Lee's fraught life and artistic career in her 2024 book, *Art, War, and Exile in Modern Korea: Rethinking the Life and Work of Lee Qoede*, which adds significantly to the sparse scholarly discourse surrounding this largely misunderstood figure. Blending existing research by Korean academics (of which very little has been previously published in English) with recent findings, Jin presents a cogent and multivalent exploration of Lee's creative and sociopolitical milieu. The book confronts weighty topics like state-sponsored violence and the erasure of marginalized histories in mid-20th-century Korea, while proposing a revisionist exploration of Lee's engagement with international currents of modern art as well as the social issues that shaped his worldview and artistic practice.

Much of the book centers on a monumental canvas that Lee produced in the turbulent wake of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, when a power vacuum gave rise to ideological factions and sowed popular distrust during the lead-up to the Korean War. Lee's enigmatic masterpiece *People IV* (1948) envisions the chaos of this period, referencing mass killings such as the Jeju Massacre and Yeosu-Suncheon Rebellion of 1948, perpetrated by Korean soldiers against civilians. Although Lee himself was not endangered by these violent incidents, he narrowly escaped another state-sanctioned massacre in 1950 that targeted left-leaning creatives as part of an anti-Communist purge.

Jin makes a compelling case for Lee's disillusionment with the country's right-wing government and his own nationalistic sensibilities as wellsprings for the realist aesthetic and unflinching humanism of his oeuvre (and as probable cause for his relocation to North Korea after the war). But she also points to the influence of Social Realist painters in Mexico and Japan who inspired Lee's conviction in art's potential to effect grassroots change. Jin devotes considerable discussion to the art and activism of Diego Rivera and Kitagawa Tamiji, consistently framing Social Realism as a transnational art movement that gained traction as a means to challenge Eurocentric views on modernism and its biases against proletarian artmaking.

This English-language survey of Lee Qoede's life and work encapsulates a masterful integration of the artistic, political, and social factors behind Lee's emergence as one of Korea's most beloved yet historically disregarded artists. By situating her analysis of Lee's complex biography amid global narratives and interdisciplinary approaches, Jin offers a comprehensive study of this long-overlooked Korean master painter.

ANDY ST. LOUIS

GREG ITO

Camps and Conflagrations

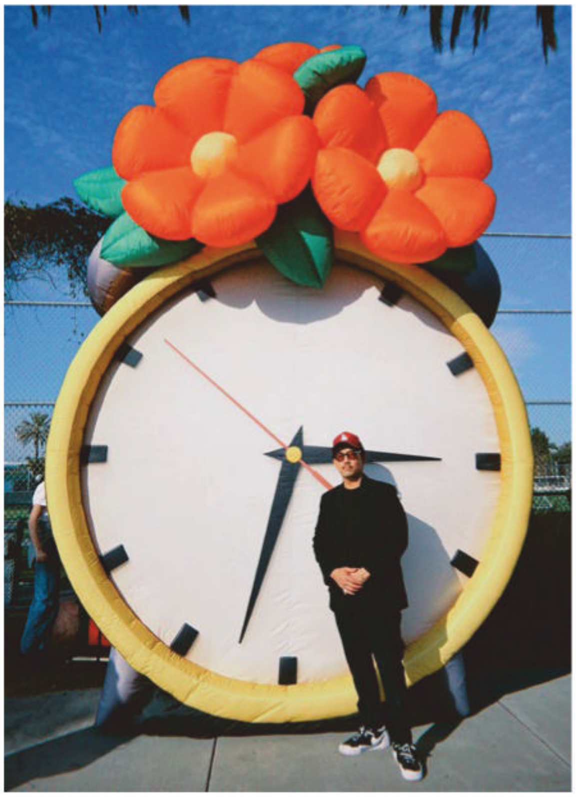
BY JENNIFER S. LI

I visited Greg Ito's Los Angeles studio in February, right before an exciting week for the artist. He was preparing to unveil a monumental outdoor sculpture at Frieze Los Angeles, and his solo exhibition at the Long Beach Museum of Art was about to come to a close. Ito was also working on projects beyond Southern California (where he was born and raised)—most notably, a major public commission for Brooklyn.

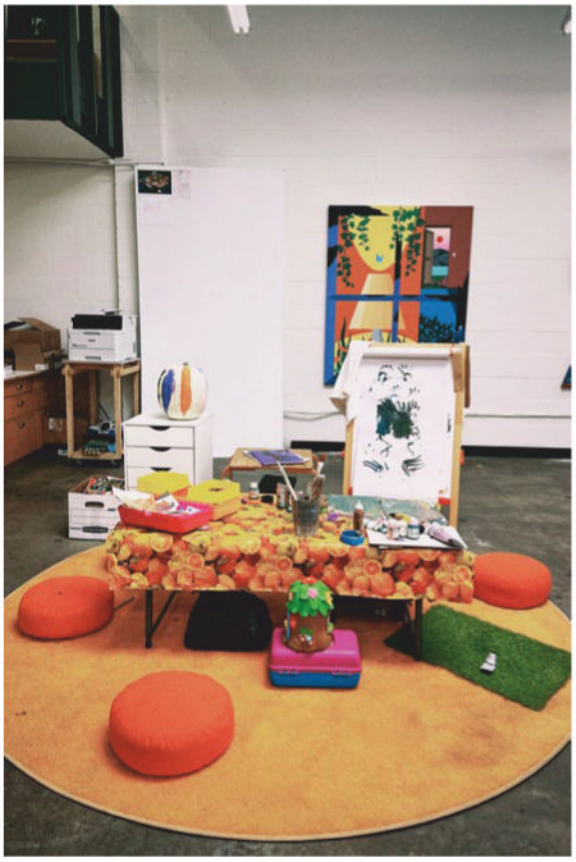
As befits the 38-year-old artist's ambition, his studio is not just one room but an entire two-story industrial building, replete with a small apartment upstairs appointed with examples from his art collection—some purchased and some acquired through trades with artist friends. Signs of his wife, Karen Galloway, who founded and runs the nearby Sow & Tailor gallery, and their daughter, Spring, are everywhere—a stylish pair of Galloway's boots, perhaps cast off after a gallery opening; toys and children's drawings.

Keepsakes passed down from Ito's grandparents are also all around, remembrances that serve as talismans as well as inspiration. In the corner of the upstairs lounge area, the frame of a black-and-white photograph bears a custom-made, wall-hung sheath for a set of his grandmother's sewing scissors. The photo depicts several wood carvings that his grandfather made while he was interned at the Gila River War Relocation Center during World War II.

Despite his midcareer success, Ito is disarmingly open about his struggles and the highs and lows of his life. This intrinsic duality is the very crux of his vividly stylized paintings, drawing, sculptures, and installations. The progeny of grandparents who met while held in the US internment camps that once confined 120,000 people of Japanese descent, Ito described his origin story as one seeded with tragedy but blooming in love, as he passes through repeated cycles of devastation, hard work, opportunity, and accomplishment. "Everything I do comes out of something I'm going through and is a product of my personal situation," he said. "My grandparents endured years in the Japanese internment camps, but that's where they fell in love; that's how I am here today." Citing another jarring juxtaposition, Ito said, "The day that I proposed to my wife, her mom passed away from cancer."

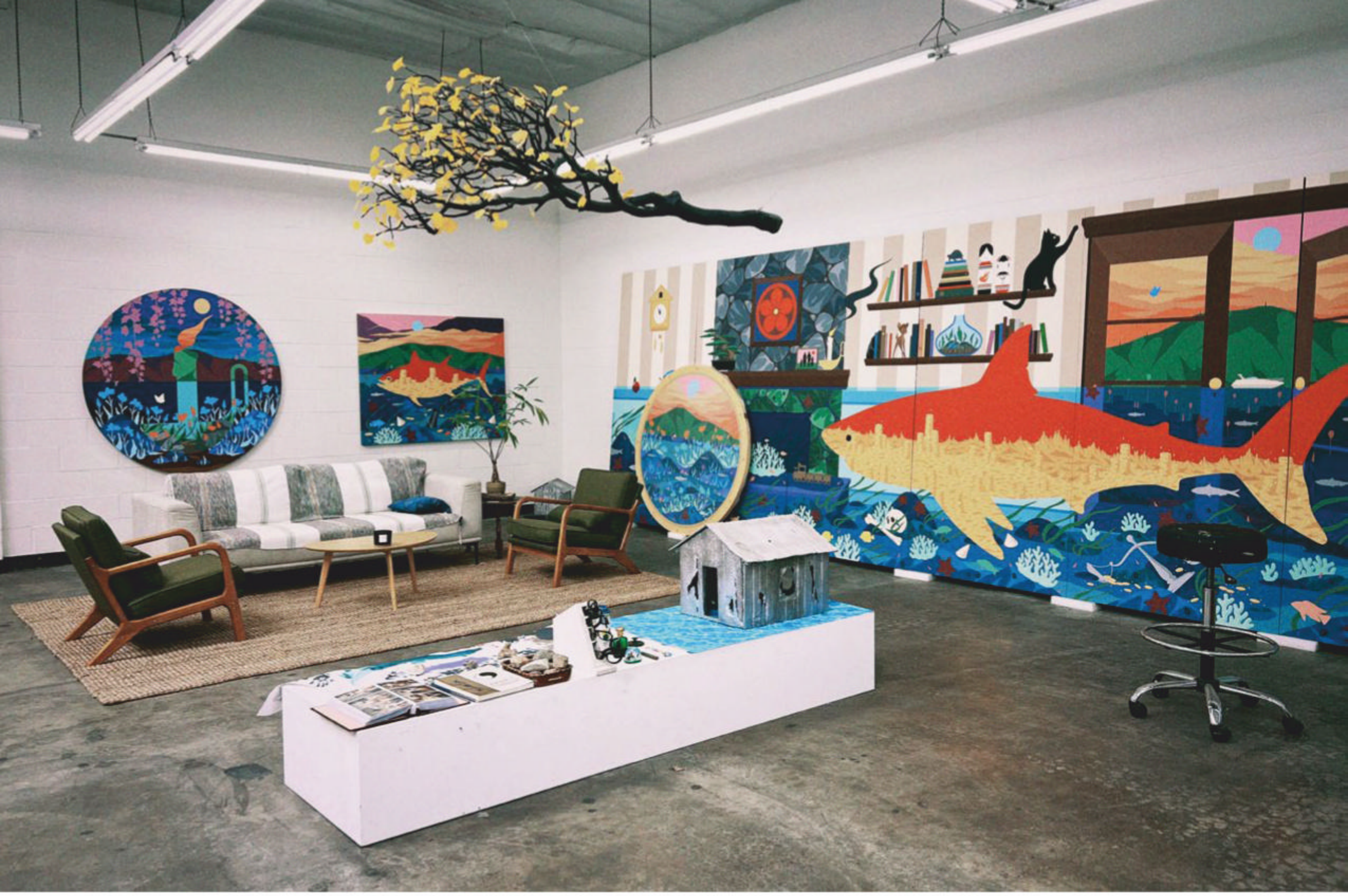


GREG ITO in front of *A Time to Bloom*, 2025, inflatable sculpture, dimensions variable, at Frieze Los Angeles, 2025. Courtesy the artist.



Interior view of **GREG ITO**'s studio in Los Angeles. Courtesy the artist.

Portrait of **GREG ITO**.
Courtesy the artist.



View of **GREG ITO**'s *Sink or Swim*, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 241 × 716 cm (right wall), at the artist's studio in Los Angeles. Courtesy the artist.

The complementary nature of good and bad events was especially apparent on the day we spoke, as Los Angeles prepared to mount a major art fair after one of the largest fires in the city's history. More than 150,000 residents had been displaced, many of them artists and art workers. In response, Ito hosted a number of solidarity-building gatherings, inviting museum patrons over to his studio for cocktails, and art world friends and associates to brunch.

Fortunately, Ito's studio is far from the disaster area. He lives in a pocket of the city near South Los Angeles, the latter historically home to a thriving Black culture—the so-called West Coast Harlem from the 1920s onward—and an influx of Japanese residents fleeing discrimination after World War II. But images of fire pervade his work, representing destruction and regeneration.

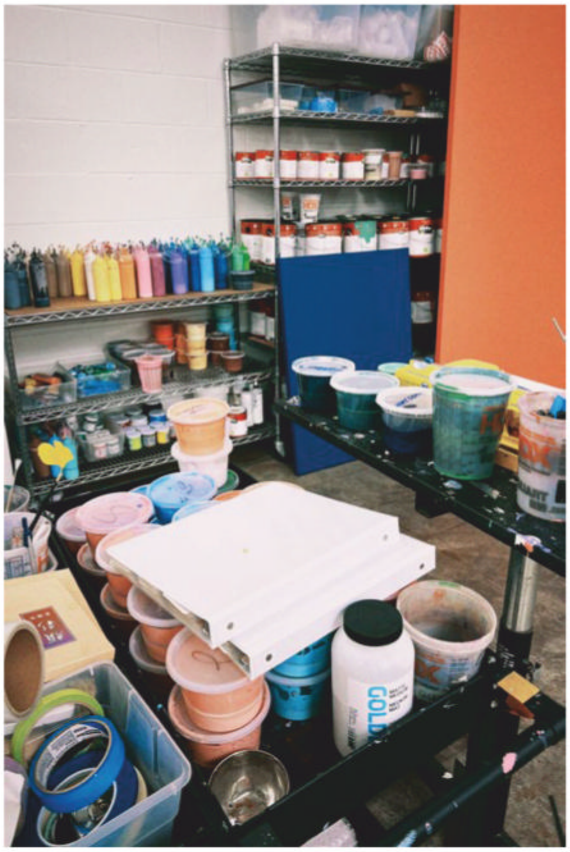
Over cups of green tea, with soothing jazz music playing in the backdrop, Ito spoke with me about some of his recent works, as well as his meticulous painting process. Like the Superflat compositions of Takashi Murakami, an acknowledged influence, Ito's colorful, stylized canvases initially appear playful and uncritical. However, closer examination reveals a depth of emotion that quivers just below the surface: a house burns, a skeletal hand reaches up out of a grave, a huge memento mori alarm clock stands before raging flames. Mike Kelley, who grapples with the darkness of society through stuffed animals and school yearbooks, is also an important conceptual influence for Ito.

Color is an essential element for Ito. A rich, saturated shade of pink underpainting grounds all of his canvases, creating a warm and vibrant base layer. Dozens of common house paints line the shelves in one corner of his studio. Accompanying binders catalog specially blended colors for future reference. Accessibility is paramount to Ito. Not by chance is his work sometimes compared to illustration; he wants his four-year-old daughter to be able to grasp his paintings just as well as a highly versed art critic.

Propped up at the back of the studio, a mural-sized canvas, *Sink or Swim* (2024), spans over seven meters, its imagery unfurling like that of a Japanese screen or ink painting. A living room appears to be flooding with water, and a shark ballasted with gold coins hovers ominously. While the scenario captures the collective anxiety of recent years, with concurrent wars across the globe, calamitous natural disasters, and ever-increasing financial precarity, specific objects within the painting reference Ito's family history. A deer on a book shelf alludes to his grandfather's wood carvings and also to the loss-of-innocence Disney animation *Bambi* (1942), which was

POSTON I
1942-1992 50 Year
Camp Reunion

Detail view of miscellaneous objects on top of a plinth in **GREG ITO**'s studio in Los Angeles. Courtesy the artist.



View of paints and supplies in **GREG ITO**'s Los Angeles studio. Courtesy the artist.

released the same year as the internment process began. A turtle figurine recalls Ito's grandmother's collection of such items, some of which have been handed down to the artist and now dot his studio. A bonsai tree sits on the fireplace mantle.

Ito begins each painting or project with a fluid freestyle sketch in graphite and colored pencil, which allows him to work out hues, tones, and composition. His works at times appear fabricated, as if they were mechanically or technologically enhanced, but in fact, Ito does everything by hand. Indeed, he lamented to me, "I'm so bad at computers." His chosen style, he said, has a specific goal: "Sometimes a painting can be more about the artist and the artist's hand or trace. I wanted to remove my hand so that people can focus on the image right in front of them." He is able to achieve perfect planes of color through the manual techniques of masking edges and using a utility knife to create precise lines and shapes. "I love Minimalism," he said. "I love when two edges come together, but I can't just live in abstraction."

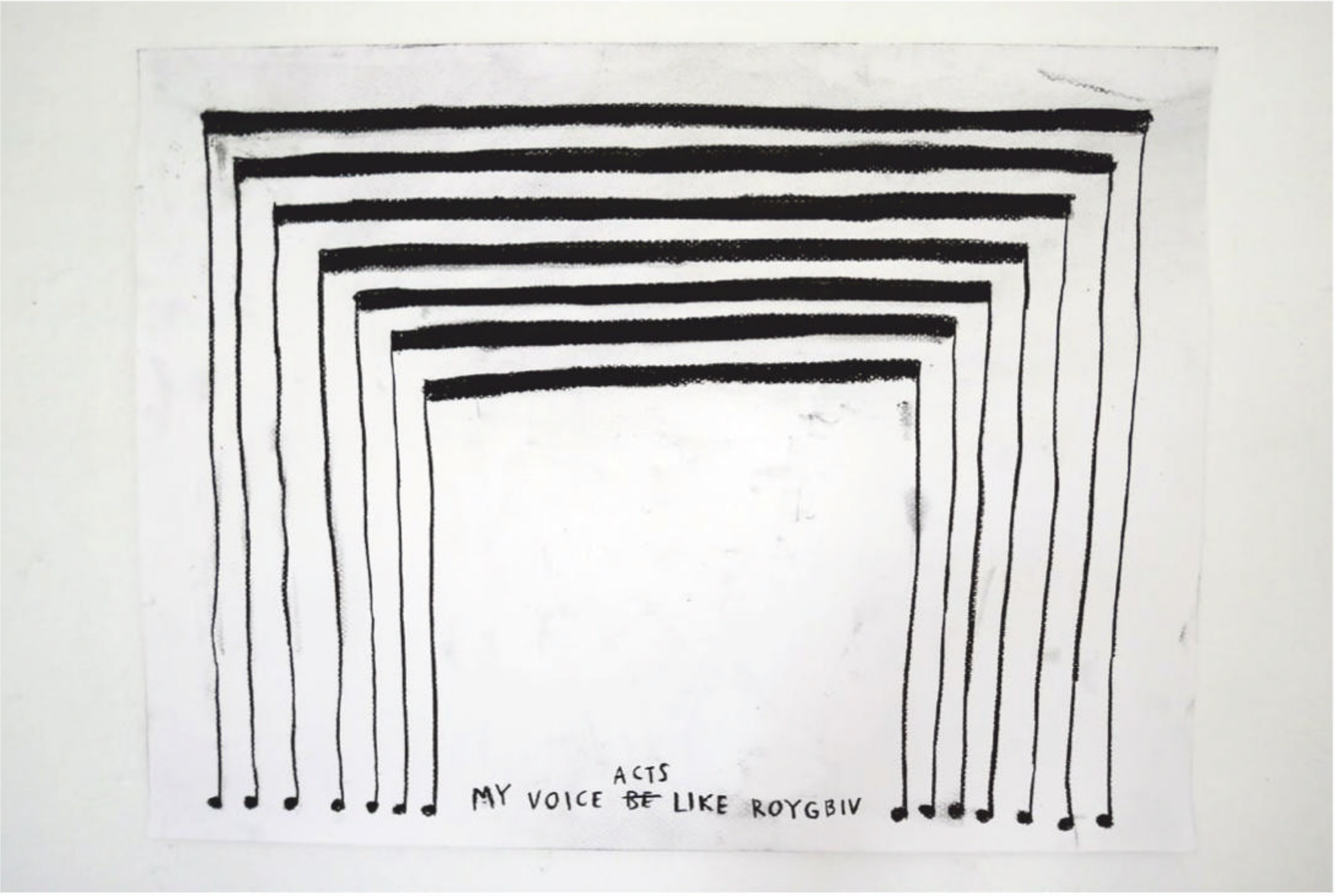
An in-progress roundel painting commissioned by a collector features an orchid: "The orchid for me is the stand-in for a person," Ito said. "I don't paint people." A flower, candle, or butterfly often serve as substitutes for human presence, inviting the viewer to enter the scene. Bonsai trees represent family lineage, as they can live for several generations.

Family is Ito's inspiration as well as his purpose. A self-labeled "reformed workaholic," he recounted leaving behind a grueling schedule to prioritize his family, which, in turn has generated renewed purpose and creativity in his art: "Before, my family life revolved around my studio routine. I used to work every weekday and through the weekend." Now he's always home for dinner, and makes time to play dolls with his daughter. Surprisingly, the activity feeds Ito's studio practice, since it forces him to take up different perspectives as they play.

The significance of family is apparent even in the layout of Ito's work environment. He has carved out space for his daughter right at the entrance—a miniature studio of her own, complete with an easel, table and chairs, and a panoply of art supplies. Nestled within the larger complex, Spring is the newest branch of the Bonsai tree of Ito's line.

CHRISTINE SUN KIM

The Street, the Sidewalk, and the Sign


MY VOICE ~~BE~~ ACTS LIKE ROYGBIV

CHRISTINE SUN KIM, *My Voice Acts Like ROYGBIV*, 2015, charcoal on paper, 30 × 40 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Signifier versus signified, symbol versus sign—that intellectual exercise from the 1990s has been a more profound lived experience for Korean American artist Christine Sun Kim, now based in Berlin. Born in 1980, she earned a BFA and two MFAs—from the Rochester Institute of Technology, the School of Visual Arts, and Bard College—before going on to show works at venues such as Amsterdam's de Appel Arts Center and London's Tate Modern. Kim uses and advocates for American Sign Language—an autonomous, grammatically complex mode of communication—while challenging societal norms regarding sound through her drawings, performances, and videos. In our forthcoming July/August issue, critic Xintian Wang analyzes Kim's first one-person museum exhibition, "All Day All Night," which runs through July 6 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. The show features charcoal drawings and other works that subtly transfigure musical notation, images, and infographics to plumb the underlying nature of all discourse.

WAFAA BILAL

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

INDULGE ME

FEB 1–OCT 19, 2025

Wafaa Bilal, Rendering of *Thumbsat Model* (detail), 2024.
© Wafaa Bilal, courtesy of the artist. Photo: Omar ElGamal.

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Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890) *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* (detail), 1889. The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld; Alexander Lieberman, *Iliad* 1974-76. Courtesy of Storm King Art Center; Installation view: *MAM Collection 007: Invisible Cities,* Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2018. Photo by Koroda Takeru. Courtesy of Mori Art Museum, Tokyo